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Taste of Home

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comfort AND joy

79 Fabulous Recipes for the Season

December & January 2008
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Let's talk turkey!

Plus more festive foods on handy cards

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SET STYLIST
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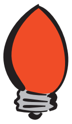

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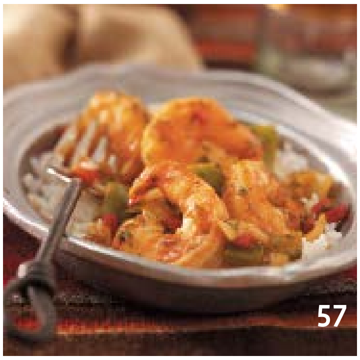
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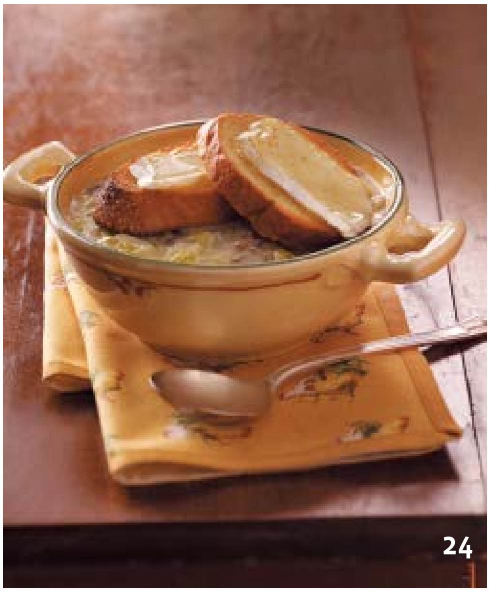
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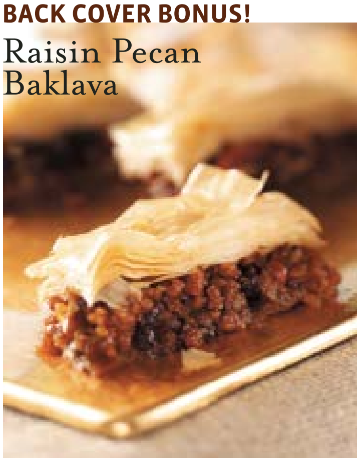

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+ All-time favorite Christmas cookies
+ More holiday side dishes
+ Craft a chocolate New Year's hourglass
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New Symbols!

★ indicates the recipe contributor is a *Taste of Home* field editor

📷 go to *tasteofhome.com/plus* for a photo of the recipe

A New Year's Makeover!

On occasion, we remodel our kitchens, restock our fridges, make over our cabinets. In that spirit, we feel it's just as important to freshen up the magazine to make it even more inviting. As we move into another New Year, I'm happy to share our *Taste of Home* makeover. What this means for you: a warm, cozy new look and feel...and some new features to make your *Taste of Home* experience even tastier. A sampling of what you'll find inside:

More kudos for field editors!

We're proud to have these special home cooks on hand to serve up great recipes and want to make sure everyone knows who they are. So when we feature a recipe submitted by a field editor, you'll see a star ★ next to her or his name. As always, our complete field staff is listed—in this issue, on pages 63-64.

Photos of everything!

Our recipes are tested and beautifully photographed. But if a recipe is not pictured, you will see a camera 📷 next to its name. If you'd like to view the photo, log on to *tasteofhome.com/plus*, where you'll find the photo and even more great features.

Cooks Who Care

So many of you share heartwarming stories about people who are cooking as a way to give back to your communities. We salute you in this column that debuted last issue—and it's getting great response! This time around, you'll meet an avid baker who launched a Christmas cookie campaign to treat troops overseas. See page 66 to read her story and find out how to tell us about a caring cook—it might be you!

Chances to WIN!

We throw a new twist into our much-loved hidden item contest; see page 65 for all the fun. But don't forget that our recipe contest in every magazine gives you the opportunity to win $500! This issue's "Let's Talk Turkey" event was a true challenge: Our Test Kitchen judges prepared 80 pounds of turkey to find the winner! Meet her and check out her great-tasting dish on page 26; see page 43 to see how you can join the contest excitement.

A word about another change: advertising. Like other magazines in the Reiman Publications family, *Taste of Home* has not accepted ads up to now. Some of you have written to ask why we've changed our tune. Believe it or not, *Taste of Home* is the largest food magazine in the world; more than 3 million people just like you enjoy each issue. That's a lot of cooks...and paper, ink, postage. You get the picture. Accepting ads helps us continue to bring you the publication you enjoy and to offer even more benefits—like our on-line Recipe Finder; great new books like *The Taste of Home Baking Book*; "Cupcake of the Month" and other great E-mail newsletters; more than 300 Cooking Schools around the country; and much more. Log on to *tasteofhome.com* for the whole scoop.

All changes aside, we're here to do what we've always done for you: showcase your great recipes and help you share your stories and memories with other cooks. That's something that will never change–I promise! Enjoy this issue's festive foods as you enjoy this wonderful season.

—Catherine Cassidy
catherine@tasteofhome.com

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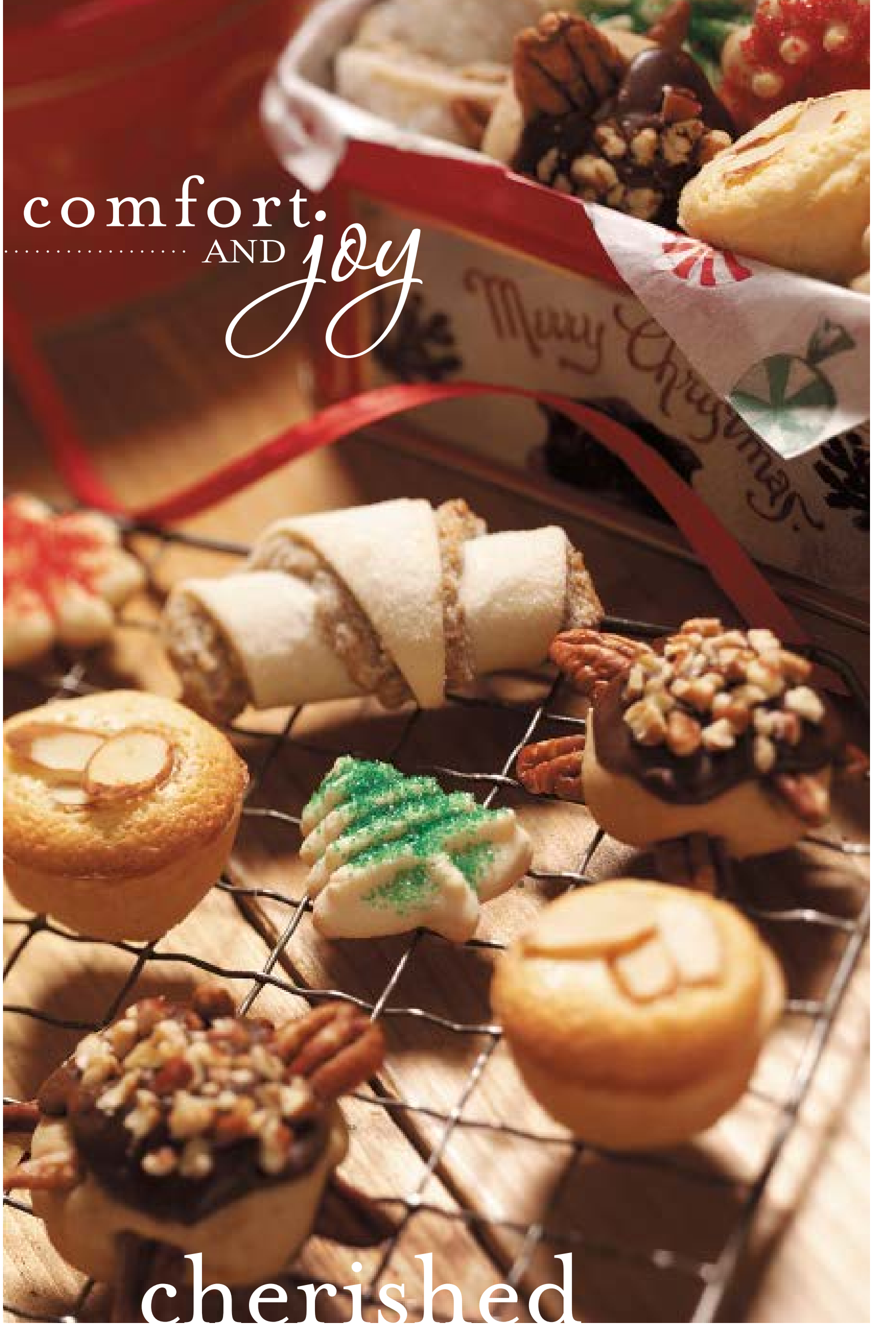
comfort AND joy

Indulge in the spirit of the season with our wondrous collection of holiday recipes guaranteed to put a twinkle in anyone's eye. Rich-tasting sweets, savory meats, appealing appetizers and more are all yours…just turn the page.

comfort. AND joy



Turtle-Shaped Cookies, Almond Tassies, Holiday Spritz and Walnut Horn Cookies bring delectable delight to the season.

cherished Christmas cookies

Dreaming of a homemade Christmas? These festive treats will add cheer to your celebration.

Walnut Horn Cookies

PREP: 40 min. | BAKE: 35 min.

Loretta Stokes
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"You need just a few ingredients to make these elegant and delicious walnut horns. The dough can be made ahead of time and refrigerated for a few days."

- **1 cup plus 1 teaspoon butter, softened, *divided***
- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **4 cups ground walnuts**
- **1-1/4 cups sugar, *divided***
- **1/2 cup milk**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**

In a large mixing bowl, cream 1 cup butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Gradually add flour, beating until a ball forms. Divide dough into four portions. Roll each portion into a 12-in. circle.

Melt the remaining butter. In a large bowl, combine the walnuts, 3/4 cup sugar, milk, vanilla, salt and melted butter. Spread over each circle. Cut each into 12 wedges. Roll up wedges, starting from the wide ends.

Place on greased baking sheets. Curve ends to form crescents. Bake at 325° for 35-40 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks.

Place remaining sugar in a large resealable plastic bag. Add warm cookies, a few at a time, and gently shake to coat. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Turtle-Shaped Cookies

PREP: 45 min. + chilling
BAKE: 10 min. + cooling

Holly Snyder
Milton, Pennsylvania

"My mom and I make up to six batches of these cute cookies each Christmas. My brother and sister always seem to know when they're around...they show up at Mom's house, saying, 'The turtles are calling.'"

- **1/2 cup butter, softened**
- **1/2 cup packed brown sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1/8 teaspoon maple flavoring**
- **1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1/4 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1 cup pecan halves, cut in half lengthwise**

CHOCOLATE GLAZE:

- **1 square (1 ounce) semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons butter**
- **2 tablespoons milk**
- **1/2 cup confectioners' sugar**
- **1/2 cup chopped pecans**

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, vanilla and maple flavoring. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours or until firm.

Shape dough into 1-in. balls. Place on lightly greased baking sheets. Push four

Food for Thought: Volunteers are unpaid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.

pecan pieces into each ball for legs; add two small pecan pieces to each for head and tail. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are set. Carefully remove to wire racks to cool completely.

In a small saucepan, melt chocolate and butter with milk. Remove from the heat; stir in confectioners' sugar. Dip top of each cookie into glaze. Sprinkle with chopped pecans. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Holiday Spritz

PREP: 30 min. | BAKE: 10 min./batch

★ Lisa Varner
Greenville, South Carolina

"I tried substituting rum extract for vanilla in a classic Christmas recipe, and the end result was this fun cookie with a hint of rum flavor!"

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 egg
1-1/2 teaspoons rum extract
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
Colored sugar

In a small mixing bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extract. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture.

Using a cookie press fitted with the disk of your choice, press cookies 1 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar.

Bake at 375° for 6-9 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks. **Yield:** 7 dozen.

Almond Tassies

PREP: 30 min.
BAKE: 15 min./batch + cooling

Donna Westhouse
Dorr, Michigan

"I make so many of these fancy tassies that I buy a 7-pound container of almond paste! They're one of my family's holiday favorites."

1 cup butter, softened
2 packages (3 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened
2 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:
2 cans (8 ounces *each*) almond paste
1-1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs, beaten
3 tablespoons orange juice
3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/4 cup sliced almonds

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in flour. Shape into 48 balls. With floured fingers, press onto the bottom and up the sides of greased miniature muffin cups.

For filling, in a large bowl, combine the almond paste, sugar, eggs, orange juice, cream and flour. Fill prepared cups three-fourths full. Sprinkle with almonds.

Bake at 400° for 12-13 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 10 minutes before carefully removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Nice 'n' Soft Sugar Cookies

PREP: 1-1/2 hours + chilling
BAKE: 5 min./batch + cooling

Cathy Hall
Phoenix, Arizona

"The holidays just wouldn't be the same without cutout cookies. This easy recipe yields cookies so soft they'll melt in your mouth. Have fun baking them in your favorite holiday shapes and decorating with colored frosting!"

1 cup butter, softened
1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 egg
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2-1/2 cups self-rising flour

FROSTING:
2-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1/4 cup water
4 teaspoons meringue powder
1/4 cup light corn syrup
Green, red and yellow food coloring

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Gradually add flour.

Nice 'n' Soft Sugar Cookies
Chocolate Pinwheels

Divide dough in half. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out one portion of dough to 3/16-in. thickness. Cut with floured cookie cutters. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 5-7 minutes or until set. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Repeat with remaining dough.

For frosting, in a small mixing bowl, beat the confectioners' sugar, water and meringue powder on low speed just until combined. Beat on high for 4 minutes or until soft peaks form. Add corn syrup; beat 1 minute longer.

Tint with food coloring of your choice. Cover frosting with damp paper towels or plastic wrap between uses. Spread and/or pipe frosting on cookies. Let stand until set. **Yield:** 3-1/2 dozen.

EDITOR'S NOTE: As a substitute for each cup of self-rising flour, place 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a measuring cup. Add all-purpose flour to measure 1 cup. Meringue powder is available from Wilton Industries, Inc. Call 1-800/794-5866 or visit *www.tasteofhome.com/links.*

more Christmas cookies >

All-time favorite
CHRISTMAS cookies

Taste of Home Plus, our popular on-line newsletter for subscribers, has even more Christmas cookie classics, just for you. Log in now and enjoy six of the best cookie recipes from *TOH's* past holiday issues.

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Christmas cookies *continued...*

Chocolate Pinwheels *p. 7*

PREP: 20 min. + chilling
BAKE: 10 min./batch

Nancy Arevalo
Brookfield, Wisconsin

Chocolate and vanilla provide a delightful contrast in flavor and appearance for these buttery refrigerator cookies.

- **3/4 cup butter, softened**
- **3/4 cup sugar**
- **1 egg yolk**
- **1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1/2 teaspoon salt**
- **1 square (1 ounce) semisweet chocolate, melted**
- **3 tablespoons milk, warmed**

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.

Divide dough in half. Add melted chocolate to one portion; mix well. Refrigerate until chilled.

Divide each portion of dough into fourths; shape each into a 5-in. log. Flatten into triangular-shaped logs. Brush long sides with milk. Assemble one large roll by alternating two chocolate and two plain logs. Repeat. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm.

Unwrap each roll; cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Remove from pans to wire racks. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.

Brownie Biscotti

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 50 min. + cooling

Amber Sumner
Congress, Arizona

"Daintily drizzled with white chocolate, these eye-catching biscotti are loaded with chocolate chips and crunchy almonds. They look so pretty in a holiday gift basket with an assortment of hot chocolate and teas."

- **1/2 cup butter, melted**
- **3 eggs**
- **2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- **2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1-1/3 cups sugar**
- **3/4 cup baking cocoa**
- **2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1/2 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1 cup unblanched almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped**
- **1/2 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips**

DRIZZLE:

- **1/2 cup vanilla *or* white chips**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons shortening**

In a large mixing bowl, combine the butter, eggs and vanilla until well blended. Combine the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking powder and baking soda; gradually add to butter mixture just until combined (dough will be crumbly).

Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface; knead in almonds and chocolate chips. Divide dough in half. On an ungreased baking sheet, shape each portion into a 12-in. x 3-in. log, leaving 3 in. between the logs.

Bake at 325° for 30-35 minutes or until set and tops are cracked. Cool for 15 minutes. Carefully transfer to a cutting board; cut diagonally with a serrated knife into 1/2-in. slices. Place cut side down on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until firm and dry. Remove to wire racks to cool.

For drizzle, in a microwave-safe bowl, melt vanilla chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Drizzle over biscotti. **Yield:** 3 dozen.

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sweets from Christmas past

Make Christmas gatherings memorable with these irresistible treats!

Hazelnut Pear Tart

“It wouldn’t be Christmas without ______________.”

(fill in the blank with a favorite food)

If you’re like many *Taste of Home* readers, this season is rich with tradition as your family worships, shares treasured memories and gathers for time-honored goodies. On the next few pages, you’ll find sweet classics that readers have shared in *Taste of Home Holiday & Celebrations* cookbooks, as well as a festive, easy-to-decorate cake from our recent “Creative Cakes” contest.

Hazelnut Pear Tart

PREP: 25 min. | BAKE: 50 min.

Anne Addesso
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

“Alongside the traditional pumpkin pie, we enjoy wedges of this pretty, pleasing pear tart.”

1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup confectioners’ sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup chopped blanched hazelnuts

FILLING:
1/3 cup apricot preserves
2/3 cup chopped blanched hazelnuts, toasted
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
6 tablespoons butter, softened
1 egg, lightly beaten
2-3/4 pounds pears, peeled and sliced

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and confectioners’ sugar. Beat in vanilla, flour and hazelnuts. Press into a greased 11-in. tart pan with removable bottom. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven; reduce heat to 350°.

Spread apricot preserves over crust. In a bowl, combine the hazelnuts, sugar, flour, butter and egg. Spoon over preserves. Arrange pear slices over filling in a concentric circle, slightly overlapping slices. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 10-12 servings.

Fancy Phyllo Cups

PREP: 45 min. | BAKE: 10 min. + cooling

Cody Geisler
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Phyllo dough is great for making eye-catching desserts with little work. Experiment with other preserves for a tasty twist on these fancy sweet treats.

8 sheets phyllo dough (14 inches x 9 inches)
1/3 cup butter, melted
1/2 cup confectioners’ sugar
1/2 cup vanilla *or* white chips
2 tablespoons milk
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 carton (8 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed
1/2 cup seedless raspberry preserves, room temperature
White chocolate curls and reception candy sticks, optional

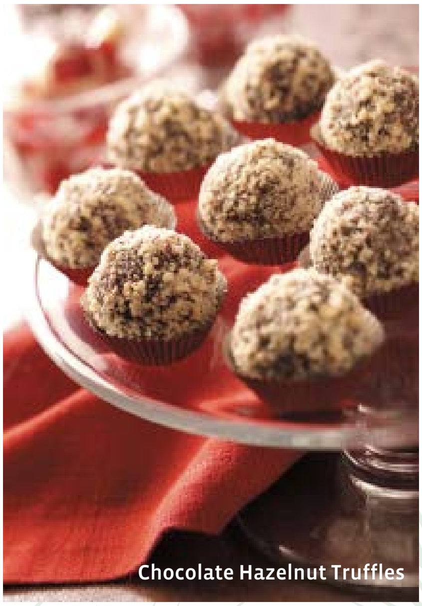
Place one sheet of phyllo dough on a work surface (keep remaining phyllo covered with plastic wrap and a damp towel to prevent it from drying out); brush sheet with butter and dust with confectioners’ sugar. Top with a second sheet of phyllo; brush with butter and dust with sugar.

Cut into 12 squares. Place one square on top of a second square, alternating corner points; press into a greased muffin cup. Repeat with remaining 10 squares, filling five more muffin cups. Repeat the process three times with remaining phyllo dough, butter and sugar.

Bake at 350° for 5-6 minutes or until lightly browned. Carefully remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

In a microwave-safe bowl, heat vanilla chips and milk at 70% power until chips are melted; stir until smooth. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and melted chip mixture until smooth. Fold in whipped topping.

Spoon or pipe into phyllo cups; drizzle with raspberry preserves. Cover and refrigerate until serving. Garnish with chocolate curls and reception sticks if desired. **Yield:** 2 dozen.



Chocolate Hazelnut Truffles

Chocolate Hazelnut Truffles

PREP: 25 min. + chilling

Debra Pedrazzi
Ayer, Massachusetts

“I’ve given these delectable candies with a nutty surprise inside to teachers and friends.”

3/4 cup confectioners’ sugar
2 tablespoons baking cocoa
4 milk chocolate candy bars (1.55 ounces *each*)
6 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
24 whole hazelnuts
1 cup ground hazelnuts, toasted

In a large bowl, sift together confectioners’ sugar and cocoa; set aside. In a saucepan, melt candy bars and butter. Add the cream and reserved cocoa mixture. Cook and stir over medium-low heat until mixture is thickened and smooth. Pour into an 8-in. square dish. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Using a melon baller or spoon, shape candy into 1-in. balls; press a hazelnut into each. Reshape balls and roll in ground hazelnuts. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

more desserts >

Triple-Nut Candy

Cherry Chocolate Bark

PREP: 20 min. + chilling

Judith Batiuk
San Luis Obispo, California

"This recipe from my daughter caught my eye because it reminded me of a favorite candy bar of mine as a child. I love the fudge-like texture."

- **1 tablespoon plus 1/2 cup butter, softened, *divided***
- **2 cups sugar**
- **12 large marshmallows**
- **1 can (5 ounces) evaporated milk**
- **Dash salt**
- **1 cup vanilla *or* white chips**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons cherry extract**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1 cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- **1/3 cup creamy peanut butter**
- **1/4 cup finely chopped dry roasted peanuts**

Line a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan with foil. Grease the foil with 1 tablespoon butter; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, marshmallows, milk, salt and remaining butter. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in vanilla chips and extracts until smooth. Pour into prepared pan.

In a microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips; stir until smooth. Stir in peanut butter and peanuts. Drop by tablespoonfuls over first layer; cut through with a knife to swirl. Chill until firm.

Using foil, lift candy out of pan. Discard foil. Break candy into pieces. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. **Yield:** about 2 pounds.

Triple-Nut Candy

PREP: 30 min. | COOK: 35 min. + chilling

Ardis Gatons Olson
Brookings, South Dakota

"I've been making homemade candy for years. Family and friends look forward to this caramel and nut sweet treat each Christmas."

- **1 cup walnut halves**
- **1 cup pecan halves**
- **1 cup Brazil nuts, halved**
- **1 teaspoon butter**
- **1-1/2 cups sugar**
- **1 cup heavy whipping cream**
- **1/2 cup light corn syrup**

Place the walnuts, pecans and Brazil nuts in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 4-8 minutes or until toasted and golden brown, stirring once. Cool on a wire rack. Line an 8-in. square pan with foil; grease the foil with butter and set aside.

In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, cream and corn syrup. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Stir in toasted nuts. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 238° (soft-ball stage). Remove from heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until creamy and thickened. Quickly spread into prepared pan; cool. Cover; refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Using foil, lift candy out of pan; discard foil. Cut candy into squares. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator. **Yield:** 2 pounds.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Almond Venetian Dessert

PREP: 35 min. | BAKE: 15 min. + chilling

Reva Becker
Farmington Hills, Michigan

These beautiful bars feature three colorful cake-like layers, an apricot filling and a chocolate topping.

- **1/2 cup almond paste**
- **3/4 cup butter, softened**
- **1/2 cup sugar**
- **2 eggs, *separated***
- **1/4 teaspoon almond extract**
- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**

5 drops green food coloring
4 drops red food coloring
2/3 cup apricot preserves
3 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet chocolate

Grease the bottoms of three 8-in. square baking dishes. Line with waxed paper and grease the paper; set aside.

Place almond paste in a large mixing bowl; break up with a fork. Add the butter, sugar, egg yolks and extract; beat until smooth and fluffy. Stir in flour and salt.

In another mixing bowl, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form. Stir a fourth of the whites into the dough, then fold in the remaining whites (dough will be stiff).

Divide dough evenly into three portions, about 2/3 cup each. Tint one portion green and one portion red; leave the remaining portion white. Spread each portion into a prepared pan. Bake at 350° for 13-15 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Immediately invert onto wire racks; remove waxed paper. Place another wire rack on top and turn over. Cool completely.

Place green layer on a large piece of plastic wrap. Spread evenly with 1/3 cup apricot preserves. Top with white layer and spread with remaining preserves. Top with red layer.

Bring plastic over the layers. Slide onto a cookie sheet and set a cutting board on top to compress the layers. Refrigerate overnight.

In a microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate. Remove cutting board and unwrap dessert. Spread melted chocolate over top; let stand until set. With a sharp knife, trim edges. Cut into 2-in. x 5/8-in. bars. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** about 2 dozen.

Festive Holly Cake

PREP: 45 min. | BAKE: 35 min. + cooling

Paula Simpson
Arnold, Missouri

1 package (18-1/4 ounces) white cake mix
1-1/3 cups water
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
4 egg whites
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon clear vanilla extract
1 teaspoon almond extract
3/4 teaspoon salt

FROSTING:
1 package (2 pounds) confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons meringue powder
2 cups shortening
1/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon clear vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 teaspoon clear butter flavoring
7-3/4 teaspoons water, *divided*
2/3 cup raspberry cake and pastry filling
1/4 teaspoon light corn syrup
Leaf-green, forest-green and red paste food coloring

In a large mixing bowl, combine the first 10 ingredients; beat on low speed for 30 seconds. Beat on medium for 2 minutes. Pour into two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans.

Bake at 325° for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For frosting, in a large bowl, combine confectioners' sugar and meringue powder. In a large mixing bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer, combine the shortening, milk, extracts and flavoring. Beat in sugar mixture (mixture will be stiff).

Using a serrated knife, level tops of cakes if necessary. Place one cake layer on a serving plate. In a small bowl, combine 1 cup frosting and 2 teaspoons water; spread over cake. Spread with raspberry filling. Top with remaining cake layer.

In a bowl, combine 2 cups frosting and 4 teaspoons water; frost cake top and sides.

Shell border: In a bowl, combine 1/2 cup frosting and 1/2 teaspoon water. Using shell tip #21, pipe border along bottom of cake.

Holly leaves: Combine 1/2 cup frosting, corn syrup and 1/2 teaspoon water; tint desired color of green with leaf- and forest-green food coloring. Gently press a 1-1/2-in. holly leaf cookie cutter into frosting. Using round tip #2 with green frosting and working one leaf at a time, outline leaf indentation. Using a dampened clean paintbrush, immediately brush leaf outlines toward center. Repeat.

Pine branches: Combine 1/4 cup frosting and 1/4 teaspoon water; tint forest-green. Using round tip #2, pipe branches.

Holly berries and trim: Combine 1/2 cup frosting and 1/2 teaspoon water; tint red. Using round tip #2, pipe holly berries. Add a red scalloped line above shell border; pipe dots of green frosting if desired. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 10-12 servings.

more desserts >

Holly Cake Shines

I used a simple brush embroidery technique to decorate the Festive Holly Cake for our family Christmas dinner.

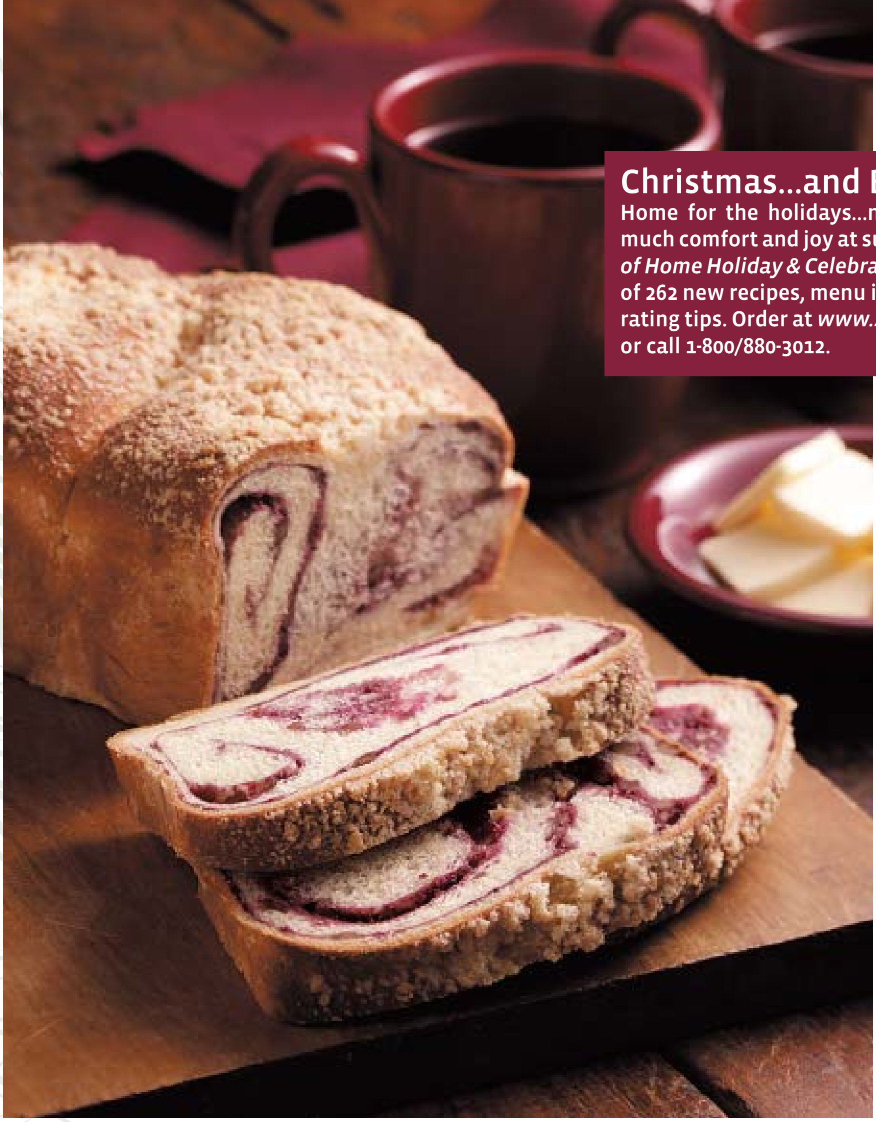
I learned this at a beginner cake-decorating class. But it is something anyone can pick up, using the recipe (above) and photos from the *Taste of Home* Test Kitchen (below).

After making imprints on the frosting with a cookie cutter, I outlined the holly leaves and brushed in color. Then I used a round tip to add the pine branches and berries.

Visual appeal is always nice, but what's extra special about this cake is that it tastes as good as it looks.

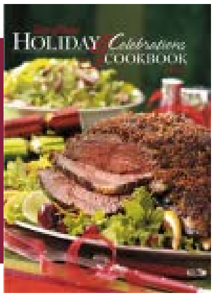
My husband, Richard, and our guests couldn't believe that I could produce such an elegant cake after only two classes! —Paula Simpson

go to *tasteofhome.com/plus* for a photo of the recipe



Christmas...and Beyond!

Home for the holidays...nothing offers folks as much comfort and joy at such special times. *Taste of Home Holiday & Celebrations 2007* is a treasury of 262 new recipes, menu items and no-fuss decorating tips. Order at *www.ShopTasteofHome.com* or call 1-800/880-3012.



Cranberry Swirl Loaf

PREP: 30 min. + rising
BAKE: 40 min. + cooling

★ Darlene Brenden
Salem, Oregon

"My mother made this bread with dates, but I use cranberries instead."

- **3 to 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1/3 cup sugar**
- **1 package (1/4 ounce) quick-rise yeast**
- **1/2 teaspoon salt**
- **1/2 cup water**
- **1/2 cup milk**
- **1/3 cup butter, cubed**

FILLING:

- **1 cup chopped fresh *or* frozen cranberries**
- **1/4 cup packed brown sugar**
- **1/4 cup water**
- **1 tablespoon butter, cubed**
- **1/2 cup chopped walnuts**
- **1 tablespoon lemon juice**

TOPPING:

- **2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- **2 tablespoons sugar**
- **2 tablespoons cold butter, *divided***

In a large mixing bowl, combine 1 cup flour, sugar, yeast and salt. In a saucepan, heat the water, milk and butter to 120°-130°. Add to dry ingredients; beat until combined. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 5-7 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

For filling, combine cranberries, brown sugar and water in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until berries pop, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in butter, walnuts and lemon juice. Cool.

Punch dough down. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; roll into a 20-in. x 10-in. rectangle. Spread cooled filling to within 1/2 in. of edges. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seam to seal. Place in a zigzag pattern in a greased 9-in. x 5-in. x 3-in. loaf pan.

For topping, combine flour and sugar in a small bowl; cut in 1 tablespoon butter until crumbly. Melt remaining butter; brush over dough. Sprinkle with topping. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 40 minutes. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until bread sounds hollow when tapped. Carefully remove from pan to a wire rack to cool. **Yield:** 1 loaf.

Raspberry Coconut Bars

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 20 min. + chilling

Barb Bovberg
Fort Collins, Colorado

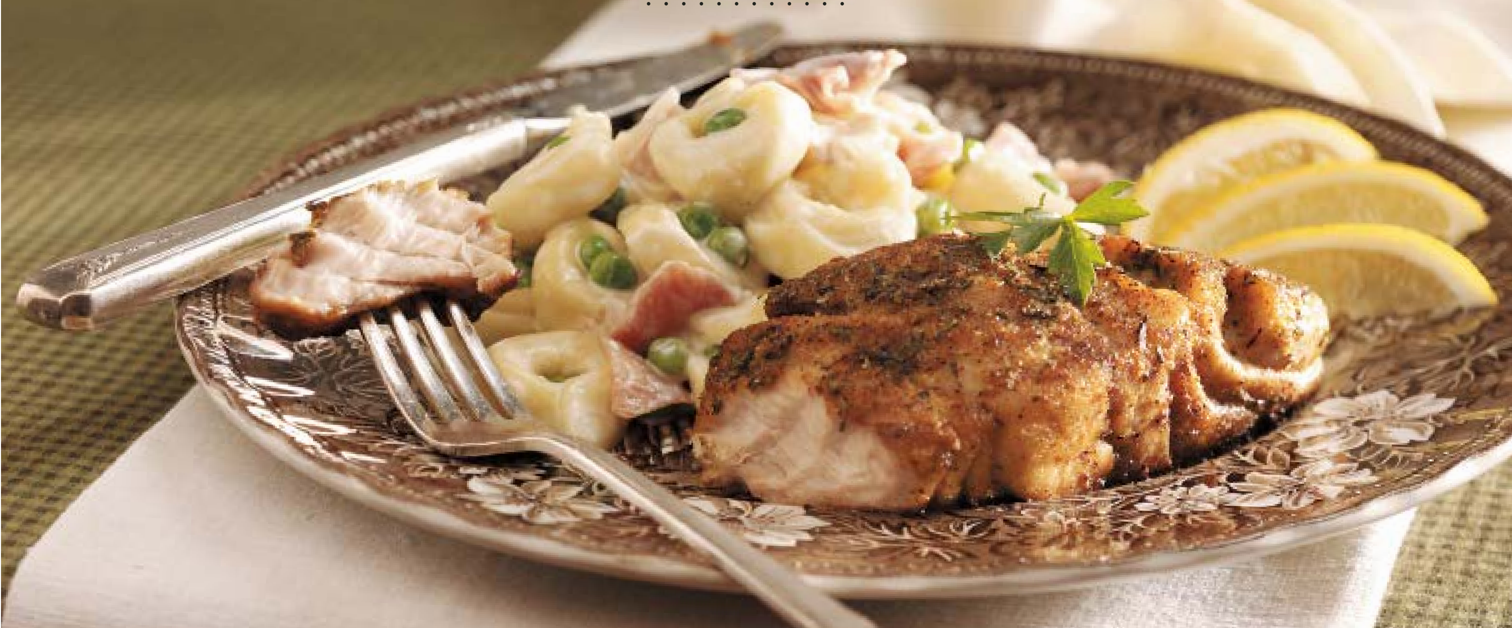
"I've been whipping up these delicious bars for over 10 years, recently with help from my 5-year-old daughter."

- **1-2/3 cups graham cracker crumbs**
- **1/2 cup butter, melted**
- **2-2/3 cups flaked coconut**
- **1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk**
- **1 cup seedless raspberry preserves**
- **1/3 cup chopped walnuts, toasted**
- **1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips**
- **1/4 cup vanilla *or* white chips**

In a small bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and butter. Press into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with coconut; drizzle with milk. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Spread preserves over the crust. Sprinkle with walnuts. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips; stir until smooth. Drizzle over walnuts. Repeat with vanilla chips. Cut into bars. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or until chocolate is set. **Yield:** 3 dozen.

*Sweet Finales. Please share your favorite desserts with us. Send them to "Just Desserts" at **editors@tasteofhome.com**, or mail them to 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129. For Contributor Guidelines, see page 62.*



Easy & Elegant

Holiday baking, gift shopping, after-school activities...they all add up to less time in the kitchen. But it takes only 30 minutes to put this special meal on the table, and we think your family will love it!

Pepper-Rubbed Red Snapper

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 15 min.

Windy Byrd
Freeport, Texas

"I can prepare this spicy fish in minutes when guests visit for dinner, and the recipe sure comes in handy when the boys come home with a great catch."

- **1/2 teaspoon onion powder**
- **1/2 teaspoon garlic powder**
- **1/2 teaspoon dried thyme**
- **1/2 teaspoon white pepper**
- **1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- **1/2 teaspoon pepper**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**
- **4 red snapper fillets (8 ounces *each*)**
- **3 tablespoons butter, melted**

In a small bowl, combine the first seven ingredients. Dip fillets in butter, then rub with spice mixture.

In a large nonstick skillet, cook fillets over medium-high heat for 2-4 minutes on each side or until fish flakes easily with a fork. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Prosciutto Tortellini

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 min.

Scott Jones
Tulsa, Oklahoma

"I spruce up frozen, store-bought pasta with peas, prosciutto and a smooth, cheesy sauce for a speedy, satisfying dish."

- **1 package (19 ounces) frozen cheese tortellini**
- **1 tablespoon all-purpose flour**
- **1 cup half-and-half cream**
- **1/2 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese**
- **1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese**
- **10 thin slices prosciutto, chopped**
- **1 package (10 ounces) frozen peas**
- **1/4 teaspoon white pepper**

Cook tortellini according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, combine flour and cream until smooth; stir in the cheeses. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat.

Drain tortellini; add to the cheese sauce. Stir in the prosciutto, peas and pepper. Cook for 5 minutes or until heated through. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Frosty Almond Dessert

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 10 min.

Phyllis Schmalz
Kansas City, Kansas

"Whip up this quick homemade dessert without a lot of fuss. It's yummy."

- **4 cups vanilla frozen yogurt**
- **1 cup ice cubes**
- **1/2 cup hot fudge ice cream topping**
- **1/4 teaspoon almond extract**
- **Whipped topping and baking cocoa, optional**

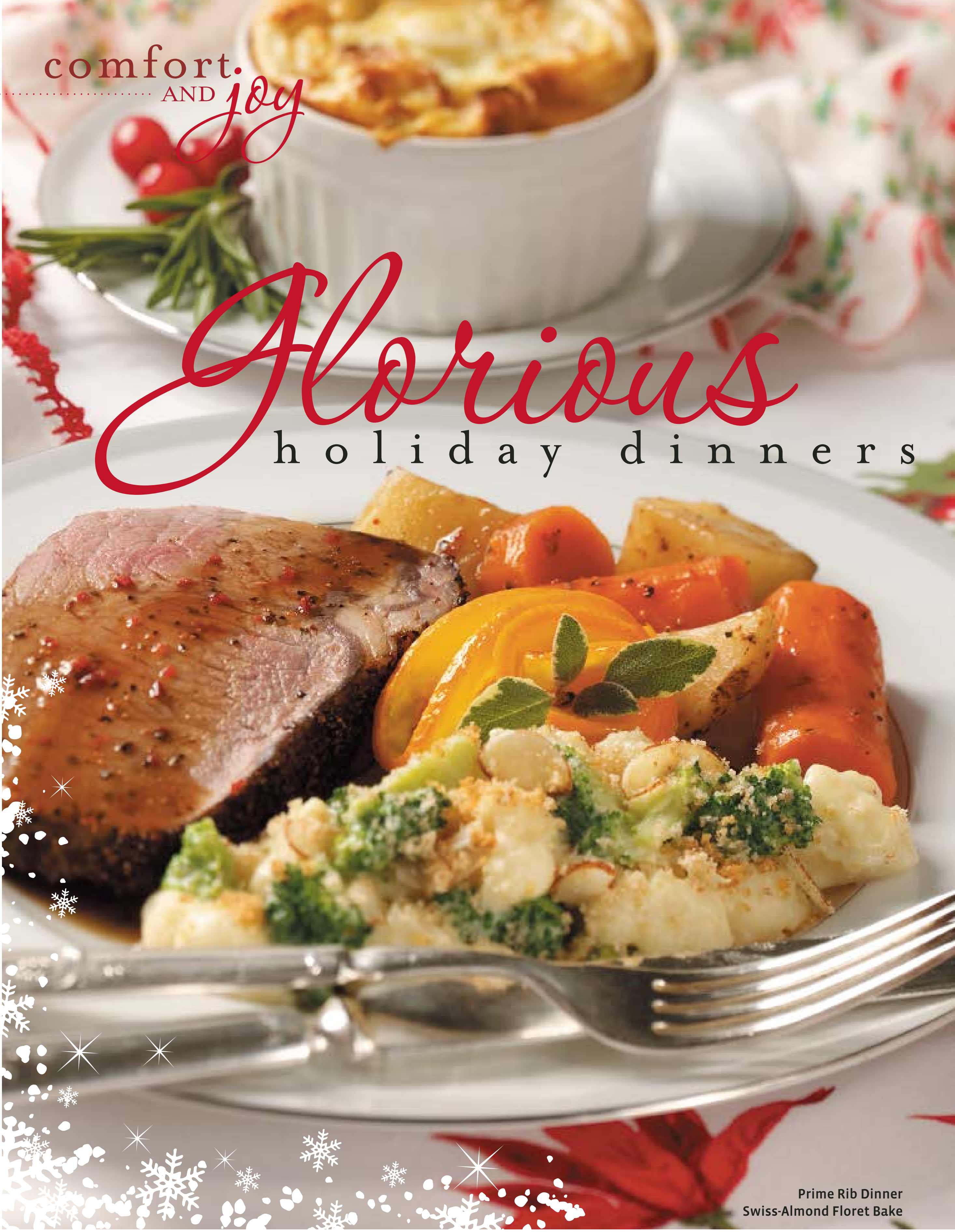
In a blender, place half of the yogurt, ice cubes, fudge topping and extract; cover and process for 1-2 minutes or until smooth. Stir if necessary. Pour into chilled dessert glasses.

Repeat with remaining yogurt, ice, fudge topping and extract. Garnish with whipped topping and baking cocoa if desired. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Quick! We want your fast-to-fix recipes. Visit ***www.tasteofhome.com****, or* *see page 62 for Contributor Guidelines.*

comfort AND joy

Glorious holiday dinners



Prime Rib Dinner
Swiss-Almond Floret Bake

Gather family and friends around the table and enjoy these easy yet elegant meals. The combination of rich entrees and hearty side dishes makes for impressive plates and many heartwarming holiday memories.

Prime Rib Dinner

PREP: 15 min.
BAKE: 1-3/4 hours + standing

Gloria Aiken
Blackfoot, Idaho

"My family loves this roast, which I make several times a year. The vegetables and potatoes cook right along with the meat. Leftovers are great for hot beef sandwiches."

- **10 medium carrots, *divided***
- **2 celery ribs, finely chopped**
- **1 medium onion, finely chopped**
- **1 small green pepper, finely chopped**
- **4 cups water**
- **2 tablespoons browning sauce, *divided***
- **2 tablespoons garlic powder**
- **4 teaspoons seasoned pepper, *divided***
- **1 tablespoon celery salt**
- **1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- **1 boneless beef rib roast (3 to 4 pounds)**
- **8 medium potatoes, cut into chunks**

Finely chop two carrots; place in a greased roasting pan. Add celery, onion and green pepper. Combine the water, 1 tablespoon browning sauce, garlic powder, 3 teaspoons seasoned pepper, celery salt and Worcestershire sauce; pour over vegetables.

Combine the remaining browning sauce and seasoned pepper; brush over roast. Place fat side up over vegetables. Cut remaining carrots into chunks; place carrots and potatoes around roast.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 1-3/4 to 2-1/4 hours or until meat reaches desired doneness (for medium-rare, a meat thermometer should read 145°; medium, 160°; well-done, 170°), basting every 30 minutes. Let stand 10-15 minutes before carving.

Remove the potatoes and carrots; keep warm. Skim the fat from pan drippings; strain, discarding chopped vegetables. Serve the roast and vegetables au jus. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Swiss-Almond Floret Bake

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 20 min.

Sandy Christopherson
Bradford, Ontario

"This wonderful vegetable dish, with a touch of curry, has been served in our home for the past decade on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Even folks who say they don't like broccoli or cauliflower enjoy this casserole. It's one of my favorites!"

- **3 cups water**
- **2 cups fresh cauliflowerets**
- **2 cups chopped fresh broccoli**
- **2 tablespoons butter**
- **2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- **1-1/4 cups milk**
- **1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese**
- **1 tablespoon apricot jam**
- **1/4 teaspoon curry powder**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**
- **1/8 teaspoon pepper**

TOPPING:

- **1/2 cup dry bread crumbs**
- **1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted**
- **2 tablespoons butter, melted**

In a large saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add cauliflower and broccoli; return to a boil. Cover and cook for 3 minutes. Drain and pat dry.

In another large saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour until smooth; gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat; stir in the cheese, jam, curry, salt and pepper. Cook and stir over low heat until cheese is melted. Remove from the heat.

Place the cauliflower and broccoli in a greased 1-1/2-qt. baking dish. Top with cheese sauce. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over sauce. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until vegetables are tender. **Yield:** 4-6 servings.

NEVER ENOUGH! Need more impressive holiday recipes, ready in a snap? Check out ***www.tasteofhome.com/plus!***

Onion Yorkshire Puddings

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 30 min.

★ Emily Chaney
Blue Hill, Maine

"A cross between traditional Yorkshire pudding and popovers, this easy recipe makes the perfect complement to prime rib. We also like it with beef stew and steak. Make more than you need, because everyone loves them."

- **1/2 pound yellow onions, thinly sliced**
- **1 teaspoon salt, *divided***
- **1/4 teaspoon pepper**
- **2 tablespoons butter**
- **3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- **2 eggs**
- **3/4 cup water**
- **3/4 cup milk**

In a large skillet, saute the onions, 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper in butter until tender but not browned. Divide among eight 6-oz. ramekins or custard cups.

In a large bowl, combine flour and remaining salt. Combine the eggs, water and milk; whisk into flour mixture just until blended.

Fill each ramekin with 1/4 cup batter. Bake at 400° for 30-35 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 8 servings.

more dinners >

Onion Yorkshire Puddings

Food for Thought: After dinner, some families suffer from dish-temper.

Fennel-Potato Au Gratin
Spinach 'n' Sausage Pork Loin

Spinach 'n' Sausage Pork Loin

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 2 hours + standing

Ed Leland
Van Wert, Ohio

"Two of our children live relatively close by, and we invite them frequently for an evening meal. They seem to enjoy the fact that 'Dad' has done the cooking. This recipe is one of their favorites."

- **1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry**
- **1 egg, beaten**
- **1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted**
- **1/4 cup dry bread crumbs**
- **2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**
- **1 tablespoon onion soup mix**
- **4 garlic cloves, minced**
- **1 teaspoon dried thyme, *divided***
- **1 teaspoon pepper**
- **1/2 pound bulk Italian sausage**
- **1 boneless pork loin roast (about 3 pounds)**
- **1 tablespoon olive oil**

In a large bowl, combine 1/2 cup spinach, egg, almonds, bread crumbs, parsley, soup mix, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon thyme and pepper. Crumble sausage over mixture and mix well. (Save the remaining spinach for another use.)

Make a lengthwise slit down the center of the roast to within 1/2 in. of bottom. Open roast so it lies flat; cover with plastic wrap. Flatten slightly. Spread sausage mixture over meat. Close and tie several times with kitchen string; secure ends with toothpicks. Place fat side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Brush with oil; sprinkle with remaining thyme.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 2 to 2-1/2 hours or until a meat thermometer inserted into roast and sausage mixture reads 160°. Let stand for 10-15 minutes. Remove string and toothpicks before slicing. **Yield:** 10 servings.

Fennel-Potato Au Gratin

PREP: 40 min. | BAKE: 1-1/4 hours

Karen Haen
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

The tender potato slices in this cozy casserole have a mild fennel flavor with a hint of nutmeg. Add a creamy sauce and a sprinkling of Parmesan, and you have a homey side dish your family will ask for again and again.

- **9 cups sliced peeled potatoes**
- **2 medium fennel bulbs, sliced**
- **1 tablespoon butter**
- **2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- **1-1/4 cups chicken broth**
- **1 cup heavy whipping cream**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **1/2 teaspoon pepper**
- **1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **3/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese**

In a greased shallow 3-qt. baking dish, combine the potatoes and fennel; set aside.

In a small saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour until smooth; gradually add the broth, cream, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Pour over potato mixture; gently toss to coat.

Cover and bake at 350° for 1 hour or until potatoes are tender. Uncover; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake 15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Ham Wellington

PREP: 45 min. + chilling
BAKE: 40 min. + standing

Sharon Devereaux
Speedway, Indiana

"For over 25 years, I've served this beautiful ham in a golden crust at holiday dinners. People think I'm the fanciest cook they ever met...never knowing how simple it is to prepare."

- **1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons ground mustard**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1/2 pound white cheddar cheese, shredded**
- **1/2 cup cold butter, cubed**
- **7 tablespoons cold water, *divided***
- **1 boneless fully cooked ham (3-1/2 to 4 pounds)**
- **1 egg, beaten**

In a food processor, combine the flour, mustard and salt. Add cheese and butter; cover and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Gradually add 6 tablespoons water until a firm ball forms. Transfer to a bowl. Chill for 2 hours or until firm.

Let ham stand at room temperature for 30 minutes; pat dry with paper towels. Place on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 45 minutes.

On a lightly floured surface, roll pastry into a 17-in. x 12-in. rectangle. Place warm ham in the center of pastry.

Fold short sides of pastry over ham; fold long sides over top, trimming edges as needed. Press seams and edges until smooth and sealed.

Place seam side down on a greased baking sheet. In a small bowl, combine egg and remaining water; brush over pastry. Cut decorative cutouts from trimmings if desired; arrange on pastry and brush with egg mixture.

Bake, uncovered, at 400° for 40-45 minutes or until a meat thermometer reads 140° and pastry is golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. **Yield:** 12-16 servings.

The Ultimate Holiday Roasting Guide

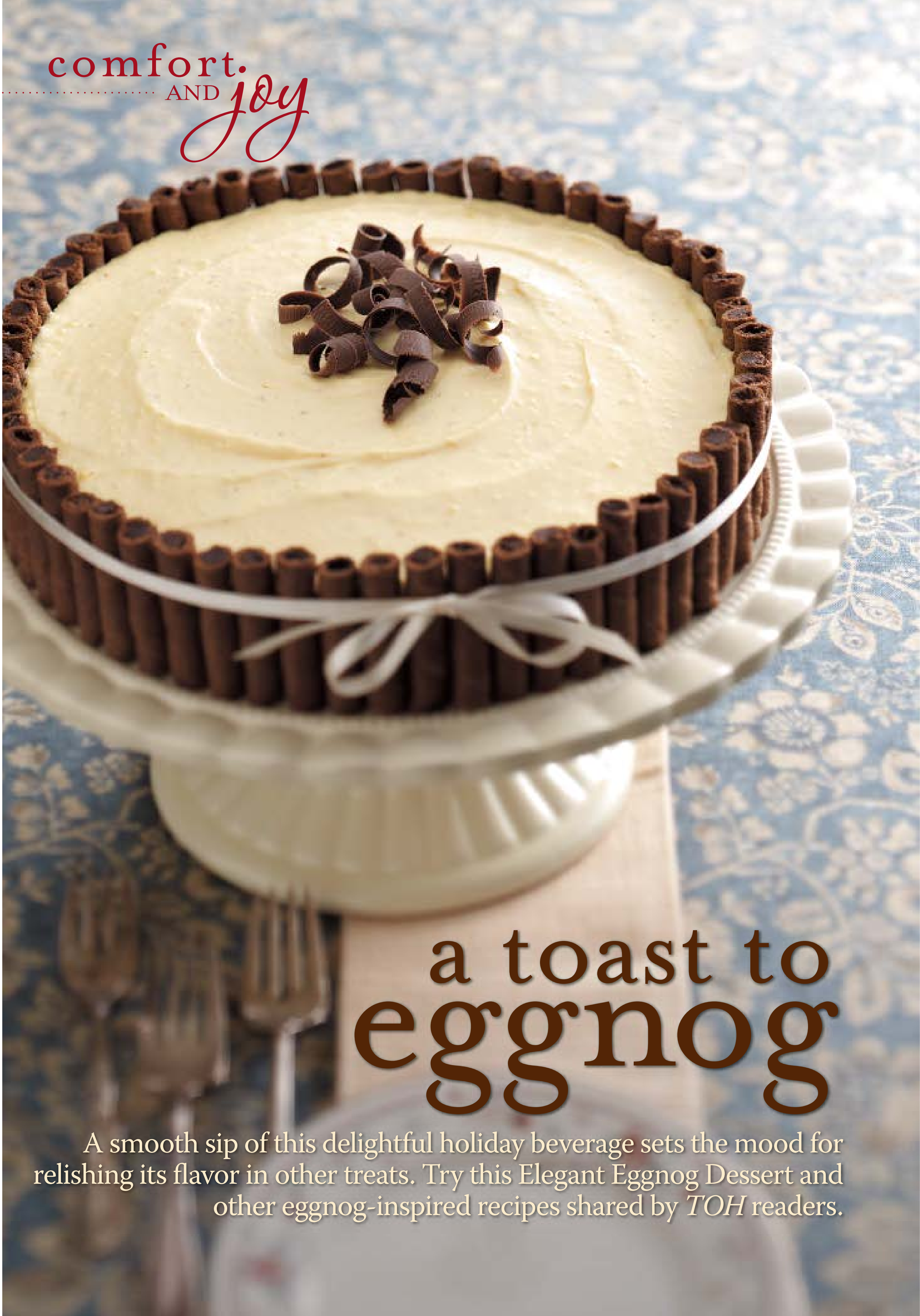
Roasting Beef, Pork and Ham

Place meat on a rack in a shallow roasting pan with the fat side up. Insert an oven-safe meat thermometer in the thickest portion of the muscle without touching bone or fat. Or use an instant-read thermometer toward the end of the roasting time. If the roast needs to cook longer, remove the instant-read thermometer before you return the roast to the oven.

Roast without liquid, uncovered, according to the temperature and time given in the chart below or provided in the recipe. Because roasts will continue to cook after being removed from the oven, remove the meat when the meat thermometer reads 5-10° below desired doneness. Cover with foil and let stand for 10-15 minutes before carving.

CUT	WEIGHT	COOKING TIME (MINUTES/LB.) MEDIUM-RARE: 145°	MEDIUM: 160°	WELL-DONE: 170°	OVEN TEMP.
Beef Rib Roast	4 to 6 lbs. (2 ribs)	22 to 25	25 to 30	30 to 35	350°
	6 to 8 lbs. (2 to 4 ribs)	19 to 22	22 to 28	28 to 33	350°
Beef Tenderloin	4 to 5 lbs.	50 to 60 (minutes total)	60 to 70 (minutes total)	70 to 80 (minutes total)	425°
Beef Boneless Rolled Rump Roast	4 to 6 lbs.	–	22 to 27	30	325°
Beef Rib Eye Roast	3 to 4 lbs.	25 to 30	30 to 35	35 to 38	350°
(small end)	4 to 6 lbs.	20 to 25	25 to 30	30 to 35	350°

CUT	WEIGHT	COOKING TIME (MINUTES PER POUND)	OVEN TEMP.	DONENESS
Pork Loin Roast, Bone-In	3 to 5 lbs.	20 to 30	350°	160°
Pork Loin Roast, Boneless	2 to 4 lbs.	18 to 20	350°	160°
Pork Crown Roast	6 to 8 lbs.	20 to 25	350°	160°
Pork Tenderloin	1/2 to 1 lb.	20 to 30 (minutes total)	425° or 450°	160°
Whole Ham, Fully Cooked, Bone-In	10 to 14 lbs.	15 to 18	325°	140°
Half Ham, Fully Cooked, Bone-In	5 to 7 lbs.	18 to 25	325°	140°
Ham, Fully Cooked, Boneless	4 to 6 lbs.	18 to 20	325°	140°



a toast to eggnog

A smooth sip of this delightful holiday beverage sets the mood for relishing its flavor in other treats. Try this Elegant Eggnog Dessert and other eggnog-inspired recipes shared by *TOH* readers.

Homemade Eggnog

PREP: 10 min. | COOK: 25 min. + chilling

Colleen Sturma
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"For variations of this favorite holiday beverage, I sometimes stir in vanilla or 1-1/2 cups of strong coffee."

- **8 eggs**
- **1 cup sugar**
- **3 cups milk, *divided***
- **3 cups heavy whipping cream, *divided***
- **1 teaspoon ground nutmeg**

In a large heavy saucepan, whisk eggs and sugar. Gradually add 1 cup milk and 1 cup cream. Cook and stir over low heat until a thermometer reads 160°, about 25 minutes.

Pour into a large bowl; stir in nutmeg and the remaining milk and cream. Place bowl in an ice-water bath; stir frequently until mixture is cool. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving. **Yield:** 2 quarts.

Eggnog Snickerdoodles

PREP: 1-1/2 hours
BAKE: 10 min. per batch + cooling

Bonnie Massimino
Brookeville, Maryland

"Eggnog flavor is infused in these yummy cookies, even though it's not an ingredient!"

- **1/2 cup butter, softened**
- **1/2 cup shortening**
- **2 cups plus 5 tablespoons sugar, *divided***
- **1 egg**
- **1 teaspoon rum extract**
- **1/2 cup evaporated milk**
- **1/2 cup refrigerated French vanilla nondairy creamer**
- **5-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **1 teaspoon baking soda**
- **1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg**

ICING:

- **1 cup confectioners' sugar**
- **5 to 6 teaspoons refrigerated French vanilla nondairy creamer**

In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter, shortening and 2 cups sugar. Beat in egg and extract. Combine milk and creamer; set aside. Combine the flour, salt and baking soda. Gradually add to the creamed mixture alternately with the milk mixture.

In a small bowl, combine nutmeg and remaining sugar. Shape dough into 1-in. balls; roll in nutmeg mixture.

Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets; flatten slightly. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

Combine icing ingredients; pipe snowflake designs on cookies. **Yield:** 7-1/2 dozen.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following recipes were tested with commercially prepared eggnog.

Cherry-Pecan Quick Bread

PREP: 15 min. | BAKE: 45 min. + cooling

Dorothy Morris
Shelley, Idaho

"I've made this tender, moist bread for Christmas for the past 20 years. Mini loaves, baked in smaller pans, are great gifts."

- **2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **3/4 cup sugar**
- **3 teaspoons baking powder**
- **3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **2 eggs**
- **1-1/4 cups eggnog**
- **6 tablespoons butter, melted**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1/2 cup chopped pecans**
- **1/2 cup chopped red candied cherries**

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and nutmeg. In a small bowl, beat the eggs, eggnog, butter and vanilla. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in pecans and cherries.

Transfer to a greased 9-in. x 5-in. x 3-in. loaf pan. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pan to a wire rack. **Yield:** 1 loaf.

Eggnog Cream Pies

PREP: 5 min. + chilling

Anna Long
Modesto, California

"I created this recipe for my brother, who just happens to love eggnog. He was delighted, to say the least, when he tasted this sweet treat."

- **2 unbaked pastry shells (9 inches)**
- **4 ounces cream cheese, softened**
- **1/2 cup confectioners' sugar**
- **1 teaspoon ground allspice**
- **1 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **2 cartons (one 8 ounces, one 12 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed, *divided***
- **3-3/4 cups cold eggnog**
- **3 packages (3.4 ounces *each*) instant cheesecake *or* vanilla pudding mix**

Additional ground nutmeg

Line unpricked pastry shells with a double thickness of heavy-duty foil. Bake at 450° for 8 minutes. Remove foil; bake 5 minutes longer. Cool on wire racks.

In a small mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, allspice and nutmeg until smooth. Fold in the 8-oz. carton of whipped topping. Spoon into crusts.

In a large bowl, whisk eggnog and pudding mixes for 2 minutes. Let stand for 2 minutes or until soft-set. Spread over cream cheese layer. Top with remaining whipped topping; sprinkle with additional nutmeg. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. **Yield:** 2 pies (8 servings each).

Elegant Eggnog Dessert

PREP: 30 min. + chilling

Lisa Scanio
Tampa, Florida

"This impressive dessert is so popular that I have to make it for our family and my in-laws every year!"

- **1 can (13-1/2 ounces) Pirouette cookies, *divided***
- **1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs**
- **1/4 cup butter, melted**
- **2 packages (8 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened**
- **2 cups cold eggnog**
- **2 cups cold milk**
- **2 packages (3.4 ounces *each*) instant vanilla pudding mix**
- **1/2 teaspoon rum extract**
- **1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **1 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped**

Cut 20 cookies into three 2-in. sections; set aside. Crush remaining cookies. In a small bowl, combine the cookie crumbs, cracker crumbs and butter; press onto the bottom of a greased 9-in. springform pan.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until smooth. Beat in the eggnog, milk, pudding mixes, extract and nutmeg until smooth. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon over crust. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

Just before serving, remove sides of pan. Arrange reserved cookies around dessert and press gently into sides. Refrigerate leftovers. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Don't miss out on Eggnog Cheesecake at *www.tasteofhome.com/plus*.

Food for Thought: You'll be happier if you give people a bit of your heart rather than a piece of your mind.

go to *tasteofhome.com/plus* for a photo of the recipe

MOM'S BEST MEAL

cold morning warm hearts

Her mom cooked up warm, comforting breakfasts served with little surprises and a big helping of love.

"Our house became a home as soon as we spotted Mom in the kitchen."

Story by
Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

When my sisters and I were growing up, in Emporium, Pennsylvania, the heartbeat of our home was the kitchen. Our mother, Marie Caldwell LaBrozzi, was the heart.

After school, we'd bound into the house with the cry, "Where's Mom?" Our house became a home as soon as we spotted Mom in the kitchen. We spent hours there, gathered for a meal, a game or a serious talk.

Mom (above left) always made my sisters—Cathy, Lori and Sister Judith—and me feel special. She'd create little "surprises" for us that she set out on the kitchen table at breakfast—a crocheted angel, a pair of handmade mittens.

We chose the following breakfast menu (recipes on page 35) as our mom's best meal not just because of those little gifts, but because it was one of the times we'd have Mom to ourselves. Of course, the food was fantastic, too.

Best Breakfast

The centerpiece of the meal is Mom's cheesy Egg Scramble. It's colorful and comforting, plus it makes a big batch…enough for seconds! Her braided Cinnamon-Pecan Coffee Cakes smell so good while baking that you'll want a slice as soon as they come out of the oven.

Broiled Grapefruit dresses up a meal, so it's perfect for holiday guests. And my mom's Hot Cocoa, with a hint of almond and vanilla, hits the spot on a chilly morning. She'd also make her cocoa and raised doughnuts for everyone to enjoy after a sled ride down our mile-long driveway.

Back when Mom cooked for us, there were no boxed mixes. She made everything from scratch…even tomato juice and root beer. We always had a garden and canned peaches, tomatoes, beans, pepper relish and jellies. We all pitched in, even Dad, when he wasn't working. Our father, Tim, was a truck driver, so he was on the road Monday through Friday.

Fun Gatherings

Dad loved bringing guests home on weekends, and we girls often brought friends home, too. So it seemed like there was always a party, especially when our aunt and uncle visited. Guests would come by to dance to my uncle's accordion playing. Dad would cook chicken on his homemade outdoor rotisserie, while Mom prepared side dishes. What fun we had!

Once all of us girls were in school, Mom started working at a factory, but she still cooked from scratch for us every night.

I work for a federal judge in Nashville, and my husband, Rick, is a retired electrician. We have one daughter, Karla, and a grandson, Kristopher. Since I still work, Rick takes care of our garden and cooks dinner. He even helps with the canning.

Although Mom doesn't cook as often as she used to (we recently celebrated her 80th birthday), she still bakes bread and pies. Many loaves of her raisin bread (you can find this recipe on page 39) go to friends and relatives. Mom has six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, and whenever they visit, she has her special cinnamon-raisin rolls ready.

I hope you'll try her delicious and hearty breakfast menu…it brings back special memories of my very special mom.

Recall Your Mom's Best?

If we feature your mom's meal, you'll earn $75. Send at least four recipes with background information. See Contributor Guidelines on page 62 or on our Web site to find out more.

Warm up winter mornings with Marie's Egg Scramble, Cinnamon-Pecan Coffee Cakes, Broiled Grapefruit and Hot Cocoa.

Recipes can be found on page 35

Leek Soup with Brie Toasts

PREP: 15 min. | COOK: 25 min.

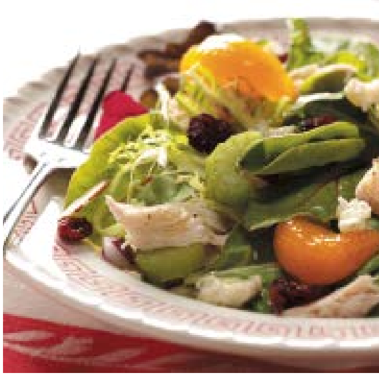
★ Marie Hattrup
The Dalles, Oregon

If you're searching for something special to serve during the holidays, look no further. This velvety leek soup is accented with tarragon, and the toasted bread topped with Brie is the crowning touch.

- 6 medium leeks (white portion only), thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons plus 6 teaspoons butter, softened, *divided*
- 7-1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 12 slices French bread *or* bread of your choice (1/2 inch thick)
- 1 round (8 ounces) Brie cheese, cut into 1/4-inch slices

In a Dutch oven, saute the leeks, mushrooms, garlic, tarragon and pepper in 2 tablespoons butter for 8-10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add broth and cream. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened.

Lightly toast bread on a baking sheet. Spread one side of each slice with 1/2 teaspoon butter. Place Brie on buttered side of toasts. Broil 3-4 in. from the heat for 1-2 minutes or until cheese is melted. Ladle soup into six 8-oz. bowls; place two toasts in each bowl. **Yield:** 6 servings.

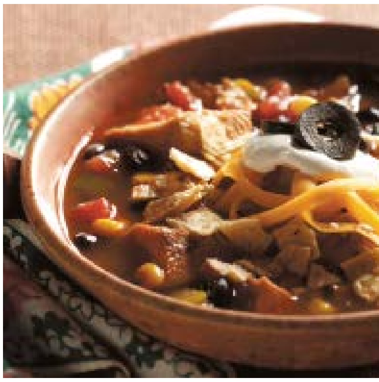


let's talk turkey

After receiving more than 1,000 recipes for our "Let's Talk Turkey" contest, our judges awarded the Grand Prize of $500 to Robyn Hardisty of Lakewood, California for her **Next Day Turkey Primavera**. This pretty pasta dish pairs shredded turkey with bright, tender veggies and a creamy sauce.

Colorful Turkey Salad Cups was awarded the second-place prize. Janice Elder of Charlotte, North Carolina will enjoy dinner for four at the restaurant of her choice. Ten runners-up each received our *Contest Winning Annual Recipes 2007* cookbook.

You'll find all 12 winning turkey recipes in the Clip & Keep recipe card section beginning on page 27, along with 20 more appetizing recipes from our readers and field editors.



CONTEST WINNER

primo primavera

Too much turkey turned out to be a plus for Robyn Hardisty of Lakewood, California. Thanksgiving leftovers prompted her to create Next Day Turkey Primavera...and now she's $500 richer!

"I began making the original recipe, which uses ham, several years ago," says Robyn, Grand Prize winner in our "Let's Talk Turkey" contest. "Last year, I had plenty of Thanksgiving leftovers, so I adapted the ham recipe, using turkey and a packaged Italian dressing mix. I like the recipe because it's easy to change the vegetables to whatever your family prefers. Plus, the sauce is a snap to make."

Robyn's family—husband Tom and their children, Kara, 14, and John, 5—enjoys this dish so much that she serves it every other week. "Sometimes I make it with turkey, sometimes with ham and sometimes just with vegetables," she notes. "It's a nutritious meal no matter how you make it. Even the leftovers are delicious."

Robyn's primavera isn't the only recipe she relies on to use up the holiday bird. "My family adores my Monterey Turkey a la King, made with Monterey Jack cheese and served over chow mein noodles."

Loves to Entertain

In addition to hosting holiday dinners for up to 20 people, Robyn and Tom throw a pre-Christmas potluck for all of their neighbors. "It's so much fun, and we have tons of great food and plenty of eggnog," she says." We also host an open house for friends and co-workers."

Tom is a recording engineer and accomplished drummer; Robyn is an editor for Happy Housewives Club, a homemaking Web site. She says *Taste of Home* inspired her to cook. "I didn't have any success in the kitchen until I became a new mother, in 1993," says Robyn, who now makes everything from scratch. "My mom got me a subscription to *Taste of Home*. Every time I'd make something from the magazine, I'd get rave reviews. And look at me now!"

WIN CASH! Turn to page 43 to learn how you can enter *Taste of Home's* next national recipe contest...and get your chance at our $500 Grand Prize!

Stock Up!

Thrifty cooks know how to use every inch of the holiday bird...and use it deliciously. So don't discard the turkey bones until you've made stock.

Homemade stock can add flavor to any recipe that calls for chicken broth, including Minestrone with Turkey, a runner-up in our contest, on page 29.

In addition to her tasty minestrone soup, Angela Goodman of Kaneohe, Hawaii shared her recipe for Homemade Turkey Stock with us. "The stock makes 3-1/2 quarts, so if you have any left over, you can freeze the extra for another time," she notes.

For a copy of the recipe, visit *www.tasteofhome.com/plus.*

Since it's just the two of us, I make turkey stock and freeze it in 2-cup containers for small batches of soup or gravy.

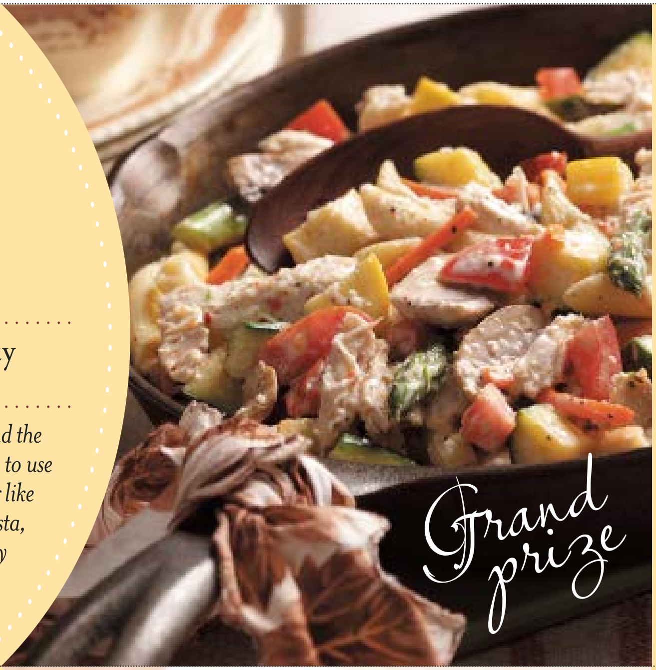
–Rita Willis
KENT, WASHINGTON

Next Day Turkey Primavera

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

Robyn Hardisty
Lakewood, California

I make this recipe often around the holidays. It's a wonderful way to use leftover turkey without feeling like it's a "repeat" meal. I love pasta, and the creamy sauce is so easy to prepare.



Colorful Turkey Salad Cups

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

Janice Elder
Charlotte, North Carolina

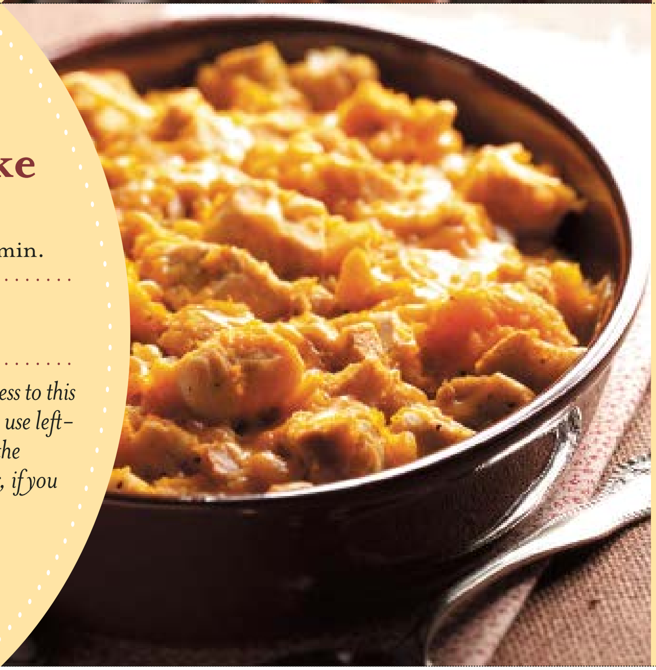
Here's a recipe that's perfect for any season, not just for a post-holiday meal. It uses cooked turkey and cranberry sauce in a light and interesting way. Guests love putting their own salads together.

Butternut Turkey Bake

PREP: 70 min. | BAKE: 25 min.

Mary Ann Dell
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

Butternut squash adds sweetness to this comforting casserole. You can use leftover turkey and even replace the croutons with leftover stuffing, if you wish. It's sure to satisfy.



Crescent-Topped Turkey Amandine

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 30 min.

Becky Larson
Mallard, Iowa

This tasty main dish is loaded with turkey flavor and a nice crunch from celery and water chestnuts. Topped with a crescent roll crust and a sprinkling of almonds and cheese, it's bound to become a favorite.

Butternut Turkey Bake

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2-1/2 pounds)
- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups seasoned salad croutons
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Cut squash in half; discard seeds. Place cut side down in a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan; add 1/2 in. of hot water. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 45 minutes.

Drain water from pan; turn squash cut side up. Bake 10-15 minutes longer or until tender. Scoop out pulp; mash and set aside.

In a large skillet, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the croutons, salt, poultry seasoning and pepper. Cook 2-3 minutes longer or until croutons are toasted. Stir in the squash, turkey and broth; heat through.

Transfer to a greased 1-1/2-qt. baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 5-10 minutes longer or until edges are bubbly and cheese is melted. **Yield:** 4 servings.

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Crescent-Topped Turkey Amandine

- 3 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 2/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 tube (4 ounces) refrigerated crescent rolls
- 2/3 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

In a large saucepan, combine the first six ingredients; heat through. Transfer to a greased 2-qt. baking dish. Unroll crescent dough and place over turkey mixture.

In a small bowl, combine the cheese, almonds and butter. Spoon over dough. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 30-35 minutes or until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly. **Yield:** 4 servings.

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Next Day Turkey Primavera

- 1 cup uncooked penne pasta
- 8 fresh asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2/3 cup julienned carrot
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 4 large fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup chopped yellow summer squash
- 1/2 cup chopped zucchini
- 1-1/2 cups shredded cooked turkey
- 1 medium tomato, chopped
- 1 envelope Italian salad dressing mix
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, saute asparagus and carrot in butter for 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms, yellow squash and zucchini; saute until crisp-tender.

Stir in the turkey, tomato, dressing mix and cream. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes.

Drain pasta; add to vegetable mixture and toss to combine. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and toss again. **Yield:** 4 servings.

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Colorful Turkey Salad Cups

- 1/2 cup jellied cranberry sauce
- 2 tablespoons orange marmalade
- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 3 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 small sweet red pepper, chopped
- 1 small sweet onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped seeded peeled cucumber
- 1 medium mango, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium avocado, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped candied *or* crystallized ginger
- 12 Bibb lettuce leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

In a small saucepan, combine the cranberry sauce, marmalade, hoisin sauce and pepper flakes. Cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until blended, stirring occasionally. Cool.

In a large bowl, combine the turkey, red pepper, onion, cucumber, mango, avocado, pecans, ginger and cranberry mixture. Spoon onto lettuce leaves; sprinkle with herbs. Refrigerate until serving. **Yield:** 6 servings.

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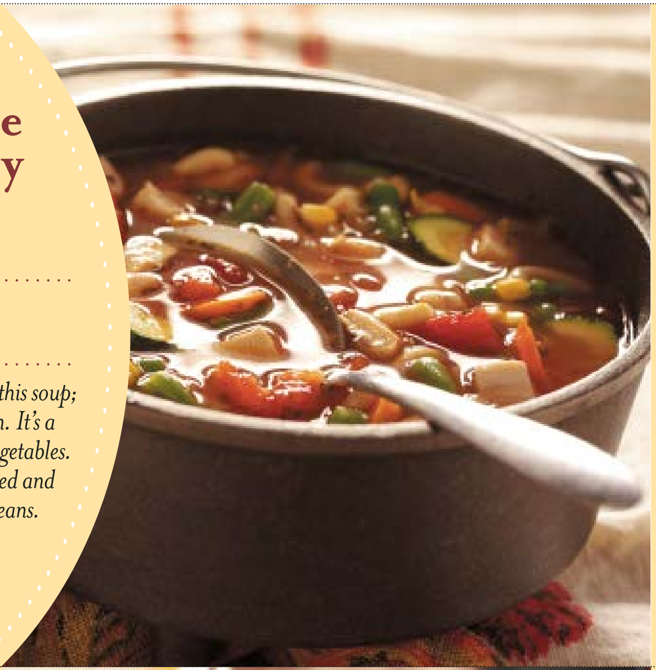
Minestrone with Turkey

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

Angela Goodman
Kaneohe, Hawaii

I remember my mom making this soup; now I make it as often as I can. It's a good way to use up leftover vegetables. Sometimes I add a can of rinsed and drained kidney or garbanzo beans.

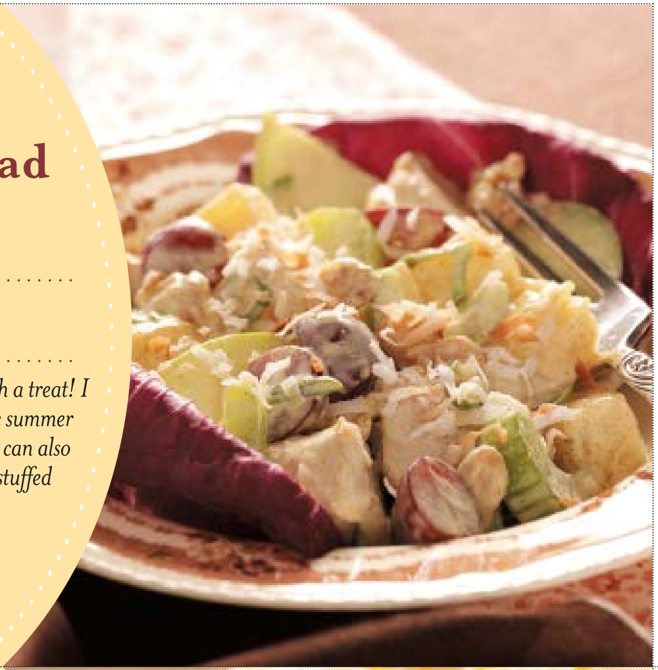


Favorite Turkey Salad

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 min.

★ Trisha Kruse
Eagle, Idaho

This fresh-tasting salad is such a treat! I especially like to serve it in the summer when it's too hot to cook. You can also use it as a sandwich filling or stuffed into pita bread.

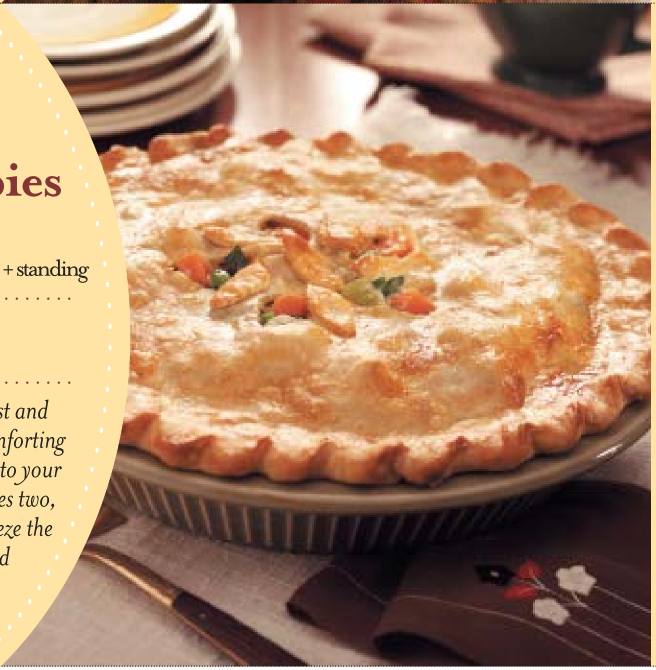


Turkey Potpies

PREP: 40 min. | BAKE: 40 min. + standing

Laurie Jensen
Cadillac, Michigan

With their golden brown crust and scrumptious filling, these comforting potpies will warm you down to your toes. Because the recipe makes two, you can eat one now and freeze the other for later. They bake and cut beautifully.

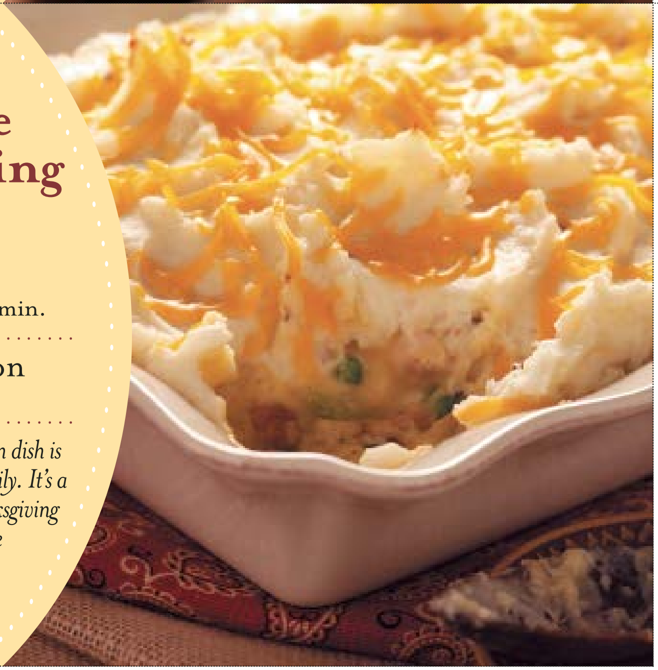


Tastes Like Thanksgiving Casserole

PREP: 30 min. | BAKE: 30 min.

Mary Lou Timpson
Centennial Park, Arizona

This hearty, rich-tasting main dish is sure to be a hit with your family. It's a delicious way to use up Thanksgiving turkey, and you can substitute 5-1/2 cups leftover mashed potatoes for the six potatoes.



Turkey Potpies

- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 medium carrots, cut into 1-inch slices
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 celery rib, diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 4 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 2/3 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon heavy whipping cream, *divided*
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 package (15 ounces) refrigerated pie pastry
- 1 egg

In a Dutch oven, saute the potatoes, carrots, onion and celery in butter and oil until tender. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in the turkey, peas, 1/2 cup cream, parsley, garlic salt and pepper.

Spoon into two ungreased 9-in. pie plates. Roll out pastry to fit top of each pie; place over filling. Trim, seal and flute edges. Cut out a decorative center or cut slits in pastry. In a small bowl, whisk egg and remaining cream; brush over dough.

Cover and freeze one potpie for up to 3 months. Bake the remaining potpie at 375° for 40-45 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before cutting.

To use frozen potpie: Remove from the freezer 30 minutes before baking. Cover edges of crust loosely with foil; place on a baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°; remove foil. Bake 55-60 minutes longer or until golden brown. **Yield:** 2 pies (6 servings each).

Tastes Like Thanksgiving Casserole

- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1-1/4 cups chopped celery
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 6 cups unseasoned stuffing cubes
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon rubbed sage
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 4 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 2 cans (10-3/4 ounces *each*) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3/4 cup sour cream, *divided*
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

Place potatoes in a Dutch oven and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook for 15-20 minutes or until tender.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, saute celery and onion in butter until tender. Remove from the heat. In a large bowl, combine the stuffing cubes, poultry seasoning and sage. Stir in broth and celery mixture. Transfer to a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish.

In another large bowl, combine the turkey, soup, garlic powder and 1/4 cup sour cream; spoon over stuffing mixture. Drain potatoes; mash in a large mixing bowl. Beat in the cream cheese, pepper, salt and remaining sour cream; spread over turkey mixture.

Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until heated through. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Minestrone with Turkey

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, sliced
- 1 celery rib, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cups chicken broth *or* homemade turkey stock
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2/3 cup *each* frozen peas, corn and cut green beans, thawed
- 1/2 cup uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup cubed cooked turkey
- 1 small zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, optional

In a Dutch oven, saute the onion, carrot, celery and garlic in oil until tender. Add the broth, vegetables, macaroni and seasonings.

Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Add turkey and zucchini; cook until zucchini is crisp-tender. Discard bay leaf. Serve with Parmesan cheese if desired. **Yield:** 6 servings (2 quarts).

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Favorite Turkey Salad

- 1 can (8 ounces) unsweetened pineapple chunks
- 2 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 medium apple, thinly sliced
- 1 cup seedless red *or* green grapes, halved
- 1 celery rib, thinly sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 16 radicchio *or* other lettuce leaves
- 1/4 cup flaked coconut, toasted

Drain pineapple, reserving 2 tablespoons juice (save remaining juice for another use). In a large bowl, combine the pineapple, turkey, apple, grapes, celery, onions and walnuts.

In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, brown sugar, curry, salt and reserved pineapple juice. Fold into turkey mixture. Spoon onto lettuce leaves; sprinkle with coconut. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 8 servings.

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Southwestern Turkey Soup

PREP: 20 min. | COOK: 30 min.

Brenda Kruse
Ames, Iowa

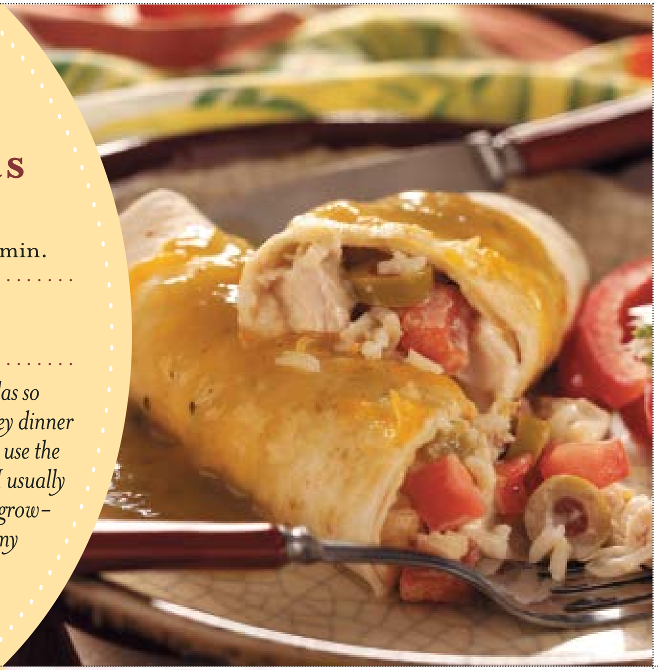
This spicy soup is loaded with turkey, beans, corn and tomatoes. We like it really hot, so we tend to use all 3 tablespoons of jalapenos...and then some. It's so good on a wintry Midwestern day.

Turkey Enchiladas

PREP: 40 min. | BAKE: 40 min.

Beverly Matthews
Pasco, Washington

My family likes these enchiladas so much that they request a turkey dinner several times a year just so I'll use the leftovers to make this recipe. I usually double it because I feed three growing boys—two teenagers and my husband!



Turkey Muffuletta

PREP: 30 min. + chilling

Gilda Lester
Wilmington, North Carolina

You have to resist the temptation to eat this multilayered sandwich right away. It needs to "rest" at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator to allow the flavors to meld...but it's worth the wait.

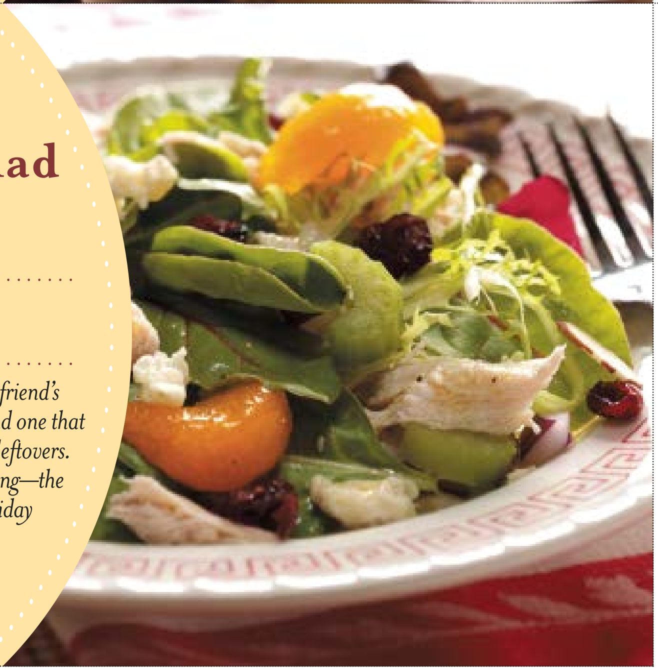
Turkey Tossed Salad

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 min.

Kristy Dills
Flintstone, Georgia

I played around with my best friend's chicken salad recipe until I had one that was perfect for Thanksgiving leftovers. This salad is light and refreshing—the perfect antidote for heavy holiday eating.

✓ THIS RECIPE INCLUDES NUTRITION FACTS.



"LET'S TALK TURKEY" CONTEST WINNERS

Turkey Muffuletta

- 1 loaf (1 pound) Italian bread
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil *or* 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 3/4 pound sliced deli turkey
- 6 ounces provolone cheese, thinly sliced
- 1 jar (7 ounces) roasted sweet red peppers, drained and sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced pimiento-stuffed olives
- 1 large tomato, sliced
- 3 tablespoons shredded Romano cheese
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano *or* 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Cut bread in half lengthwise; carefully hollow out top and bottom, leaving a 1-in. shell (discard removed bread or save for another use).

In a small bowl, combine the oil, vinegar, basil, garlic, salt and pepper flakes; brush over cut sides of bread. In the bottom bread shell, layer the turkey, provolone cheese, red peppers, olives and tomato. Sprinkle with Romano cheese, oregano and pepper. Replace bread top.

Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 30 minutes. Cut into slices. **Yield:** 6 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
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Turkey Tossed Salad

- 1 snack-size cup (4 ounces) mandarin oranges
- 1 package (10 ounces) ready-to-serve salad greens
- 4 cups shredded cooked turkey
- 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled blue cheese
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- Dash salt and pepper

Drain oranges, reserving syrup. In a large bowl, combine the oranges, salad greens, turkey, blue cheese, almonds, cranberries, celery and onion.

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the remaining ingredients. Add the reserved syrup and shake well. Drizzle over salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 12 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS: 1-1/2 cups equals 199 calories, 10 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 44 mg cholesterol, 211 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 17 g protein. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES:** 2 very lean meat, 2 fat, 1 vegetable.

TASTE OF HOME
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Southwestern Turkey Soup

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) chicken broth
- 2 to 3 tablespoons diced jalapeno pepper
- 3 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1-1/2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chilies, undrained
- 1-1/2 cups frozen corn
- Sour cream, coarsely crushed tortilla chips, shredded cheddar cheese and sliced ripe olives, optional

In a large saucepan, saute onion in oil until tender. Stir in the broth, jalapeno, cumin, chili powder, salt and cayenne. Add the turkey, beans, tomatoes and corn.

Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes or until heated through. Garnish with sour cream, tortilla chips, cheese and olives if desired. **Yield:** 7 servings.

EDITOR'S NOTE: When cutting or seeding hot peppers, use rubber or plastic gloves to protect your hands. Avoid touching your face.

TASTE OF HOME
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Turkey Enchiladas

- 3 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup cooked long grain rice
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup canned chopped green chilies
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup sliced ripe olives
- 1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 8 flour tortillas (10 inches)
- 1 can (28 ounces) green enchilada sauce, *divided*
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Mexican cheese blend, *divided*

In a large saucepan, combine the first 10 ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Place 1/2 cup turkey mixture down the center of each tortilla; top each with 1 teaspoon enchilada sauce and 1 tablespoon cheese. Roll up and place seam side down in a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Pour remaining enchilada sauce over top; sprinkle with remaining cheese.

Cover and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Uncover; bake 8-10 minutes longer or until bubbly. **Yield:** 8 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
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Chicken Cordon Bleu

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 40 min.

★ Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

For Christmas dinner or any special occasion, these attractive chicken rolls are my favorite entree. A ham-and-Swiss cheese filling dresses them up, and everyone enjoys the crispy, golden brown coating.

Sweet Milk Dinner Rolls

PREP: 20 min. + rising
BAKE: 35 min.

★ Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

A hint of sweetness in these tender buns brings many compliments. Served warm with butter or jam, they're a big hit at any meal. They reheat nicely, too.

Mixed Bean Salad

PREP: 15 min. + chilling

★ Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

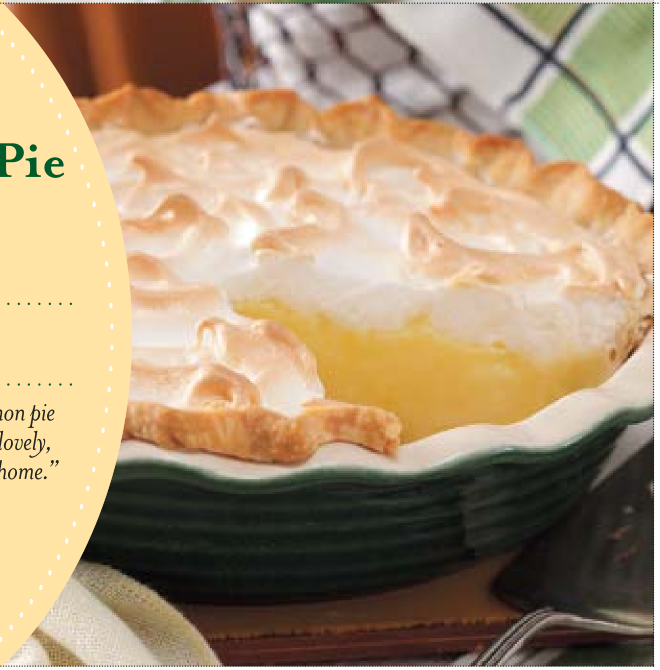
Making this colorful salad a day ahead gives the flavors time to blend. We love its tangy-sweet dressing.

Lemon Meringue Pie

PREP: 35 min.
BAKE: 15 min. + chilling

★ Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

The recipe for this yummy lemon pie comes from my mother. It's a lovely, special dessert that feels like "home."



EDITOR'S FAVORITE MEAL (P. 46)

Mixed Bean Salad

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (16 ounces) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) cut wax beans, drained
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) cut green beans, drained
- 3 celery ribs, sliced
- 1/2 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped onion

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, vinegar, oil, salt and pepper. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat; cool slightly.

In a large salad bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Drizzle with dressing; toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Serve with a slotted spoon. **Yield:** 8 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Lemon Meringue Pie

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- 2 cups cold water
- 2 egg yolks, beaten
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 teaspoon butter

MERINGUE:

- 3 egg whites
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches), baked

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch and salt. Stir in water until smooth. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat; cook and stir 2 minutes longer.

Remove from the heat. Gradually stir 1 cup hot filling into egg yolks; return all to the pan. Bring to a gentle boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Gently stir in lemon juice, peel and butter until butter is melted. Set aside and keep warm.

For meringue, in a small mixing bowl, beat egg whites and cream of tartar on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, on high until stiff glossy peaks form and sugar is dissolved.

Pour filling into crust. Spread meringue over hot filling, sealing edges to crust. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until meringue is golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour; refrigerate for at least 3 hours before serving. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Chicken Cordon Bleu

- 8 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (8 ounces *each*)
- 8 thin slices deli ham
- 8 slices Swiss cheese
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups crushed cornflakes
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Flatten chicken to 1/4-in. thickness. Top each with a slice of ham and cheese. Roll up and tuck in ends; secure with toothpicks.

In a small bowl, whisk eggs and milk. In another bowl, combine cornflakes and seasonings. Dip chicken in egg mixture, then roll in crumbs.

Place on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until chicken juices run clear. Discard toothpicks before serving. **Yield:** 8 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Sweet Milk Dinner Rolls

- 1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast
- 2 cups warm milk (110° to 115°)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 to 5 cups all-purpose flour

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in warm milk. Add sugar, butter, salt and 3 cups flour; beat until smooth. Add enough remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down. Turn onto a floured surface; divide into 16 pieces. Shape each into a ball. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes.

Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks. Serve warm. **Yield:** 16 rolls.

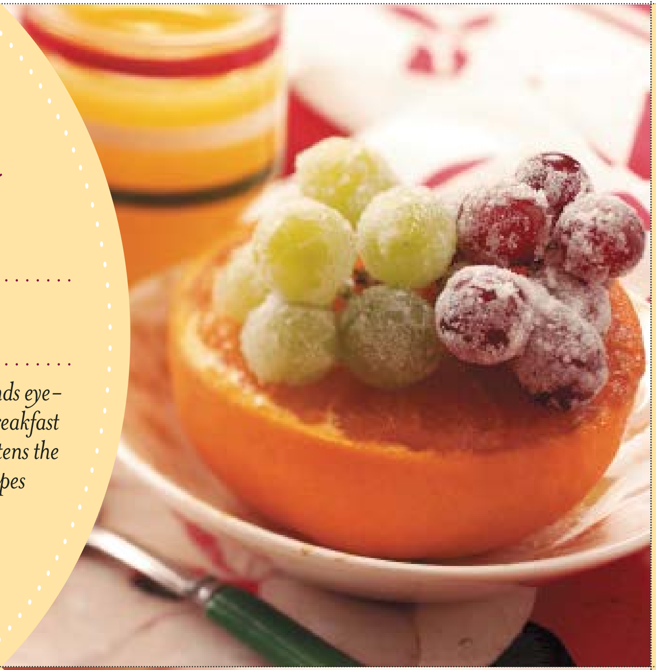
TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Broiled Grapefruit

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 min.

Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

This easy-to-prepare dish lends eye-catching appeal to a winter breakfast or brunch. Brown sugar sweetens the tart fruit, and the sugared grapes add a pretty accent.



Cinnamon-Pecan Coffee Cakes

PREP: 30 min. + rising
BAKE: 25 min. + cooling

Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

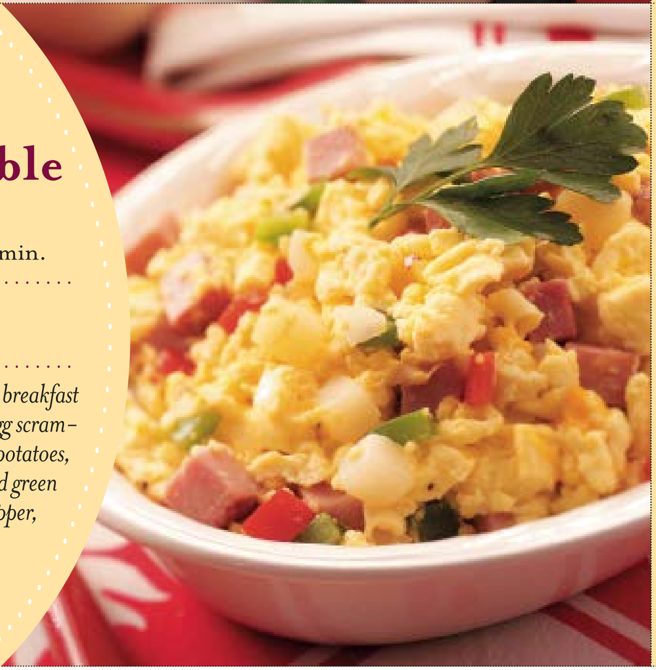
With their cinnamon swirls, these lovely braids taste and smell as good as they look! For a holiday touch, top the icing with pecans and candied cherries.

Egg Scramble

PREP: 15 min. | COOK: 20 min.

Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

Perfect for a special-occasion breakfast or holiday brunch, this easy egg scramble is warm and hearty, with potatoes, ham, cheese and sweet red and green peppers. Try it for a casual supper, too.



Hot Cocoa

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 15 min.

Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

Treat your family to this comforting, homemade cocoa as you decorate the tree or open holiday gifts. Vanilla and almond extracts make it taste even more special.

MOM'S BEST MEAL (P. 22)

Egg Scramble

- **1-1/2 cups diced peeled potatoes**
- **1/2 cup chopped sweet red pepper**
- **1/2 cup chopped green pepper**
- **1/2 cup chopped onion**
- **2 teaspoons vegetable oil, *divided***
- **2 cups cubed fully cooked ham**
- **16 eggs**
- **2/3 cup sour cream**
- **1/2 cup milk**
- **1 teaspoon onion salt**
- **1/2 teaspoon garlic salt**
- **1/4 teaspoon pepper**
- **2 cups (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese, *divided***

Place potatoes in a small saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until tender. Drain.

In a large skillet, saute half of the peppers and onion in 1 teaspoon oil until tender. Add half of the ham and potatoes; saute 2-3 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, in a blender, combine the eggs, sour cream, milk, onion salt, garlic salt and pepper. Cover and process until smooth. Pour half over vegetable mixture; cook and stir over medium heat until eggs are completely set. Sprinkle with 1 cup cheese. Repeat with remaining ingredients. **Yield:** 10 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Hot Cocoa

- **1 cup sugar**
- **2/3 cup baking cocoa**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **8 cups milk**
- **2/3 cup water**
- **2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- **1/2 teaspoon almond extract**
- **Miniature marshmallows, optional**

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, cocoa and salt. Stir in milk and water. Cook and stir over medium heat until heated through. Remove from the heat; stir in extracts. Serve in mugs with marshmallows if desired. **Yield:** 10 servings (2-1/2 quarts).

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Broiled Grapefruit

- **5 medium pink grapefruit**
- **1/4 cup packed brown sugar**
- **2 tablespoons plus 1/4 cup sugar, *divided***
- **2 tablespoons butter, melted**
- **Seedless red and green grape clusters**

Cut each grapefruit in half horizontally. With a sharp knife, cut around each section to loosen fruit. Place grapefruit halves, cut side up, in a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan.

Combine brown sugar and 2 tablespoons sugar; sprinkle over grapefruit. Drizzle with butter. Broil 4 in. from the heat until sugar is bubbly.

For garnish, rinse grape clusters and dip in remaining sugar. Place on grapefruit; serve warm. **Yield:** 10 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Cinnamon-Pecan Coffee Cakes

- **6 to 6-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **2 packages (1/4 ounce *each*) active dry yeast**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons salt**
- **1/2 teaspoon sugar**
- **1-1/2 cups water**
- **1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons butter, softened, *divided***
- **2 eggs**
- **1 cup chopped pecans**
- **1/2 cup packed brown sugar**
- **1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

GLAZE:

- **2 cups confectioners' sugar**
- **1/4 teaspoon almond extract**
- **2 to 3 tablespoons water**

In a large mixing bowl, combine 3 cups flour, yeast, salt and sugar. In a small saucepan, heat water and 1/2 cup butter to 120°-130°. Add to dry ingredients; beat just until moistened. Add eggs; beat until smooth. Stir in enough emaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour. Punch dough down. Divide into six portions. Roll out each portion into a 12-in. x 6-in. rectangle. Melt remaining butter; brush over dough. Combine pecans, brown sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over dough to within 1/2 in. of edges. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seams to seal.

Place three ropes seam side down on a greased baking sheet and braid; pinch ends to seal and tuck under. Repeat with remaining ropes. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.

Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks. Combine glaze ingredients; drizzle over loaves. Serve warm. **Yield:** 2 loaves.

POTLUCK PLEASERS (P. 48)

Fiesta Lasagna

PREP: 25 min. | BAKE: 70 min. + standing

★ Karen Ann Bland
Gove, Kansas

Loaded with popular Mexican-style ingredients, this filling lasagna will appeal to the entire gang, whether you make it for your family or take it to a potluck. Every bite is mmm-good!

Creamy Corn Salad

PREP: 25 min. + chilling

Esther Horst
Monterey, Tennessee

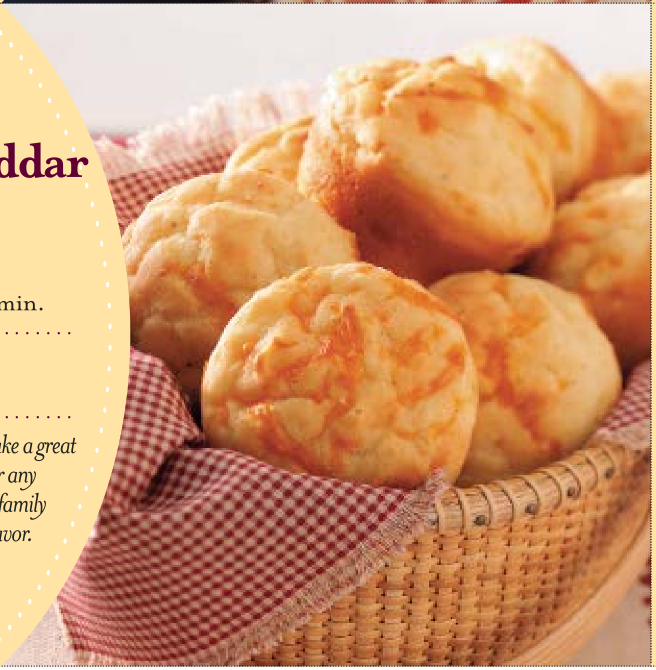
I remember enjoying a salad similar to this one when I was a girl. I never got the recipe, but I think I was able to duplicate it pretty well. We enjoy it alongside rice and beans.

Cracked Pepper Cheddar Muffins

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 25 min.

Susan Kelm
Mineral Point, Wisconsin

These warm, golden muffins make a great accompaniment to soup, stew or any other cold-weather entree. My family loves the cheese-and-pepper flavor.



Purple-Ribbon Pumpkin Cake

PREP: 25 min. | BAKE: 55 min. + cooling

Debby Powers
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida

I belong to a Christmas village collectors' club, and we all bring a dish to our meetings. This cake is always a hit. It's a Thanksgiving family favorite, too, and disappears before the pumpkin pie.

Cracked Pepper Cheddar Muffins

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 1 egg
- 1-1/4 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and pepper. In another bowl, whisk the egg, milk and oil. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in cheese.

Fill greased muffin cups two-thirds full. Bake at 375° for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack. Serve warm. **Yield:** 1 dozen.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Purple-Ribbon Pumpkin Cake

- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pack pumpkin
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING:

- 2 packages (3 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pecan halves, optional

In a large mixing bowl, beat pumpkin, sugar, eggs and oil until well blended. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, salt, ginger and nutmeg; gradually beat into pumpkin mixture until blended.

Pour into a greased and floured 10-in. fluted tube pan. Bake at 350° for 55-65 minutes or until cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

In a small mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Add confectioners' sugar and vanilla; beat until smooth. Frost top and sides of cake. Garnish with pecan halves if desired. **Yield:** 12 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Fiesta Lasagna

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 can (16 ounces) refried beans
- 1 can (15-1/2 ounces) mild chili beans
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) Mexican stewed tomatoes, drained
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies
- 1 envelope reduced-sodium taco seasoning
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1-1/4 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1-1/4 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 3/4 cup small-curd cottage cheese
- 1-1/4 cups sour cream, *divided*
- 9 lasagna noodles, cooked, rinsed and drained

In a Dutch oven, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in the beans, tomatoes, salsa, chilies and seasonings.

In a bowl, combine Monterey Jack and mozzarella cheeses; set aside 1-1/2 cups. Stir cottage cheese and 3/4 cup sour cream into remaining cheese mixture.

Spread 1 cup meat sauce into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Layer with three noodles, and a third of the cottage cheese mixture and meat sauce. Repeat layers twice (dish will be full). Cover and bake at 350° for 1 hour.

Uncover; spread with remaining sour cream. Sprinkle with reserved cheeses. Bake 10-12 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand for 20 minutes before serving. **Yield:** 12 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Creamy Corn Salad

- 6 cups frozen corn, thawed
- 3 cups chopped seeded tomatoes
- 1 cup cubed avocado
- 2/3 cup julienned sweet red pepper
- 2/3 cup julienned green pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onion

DRESSING:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In a large bowl, combine the corn, tomatoes, avocado, peppers and onion. In a small bowl, whisk the dressing ingredients. Pour over salad and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes or until chilled. **Yield:** 12 servings.

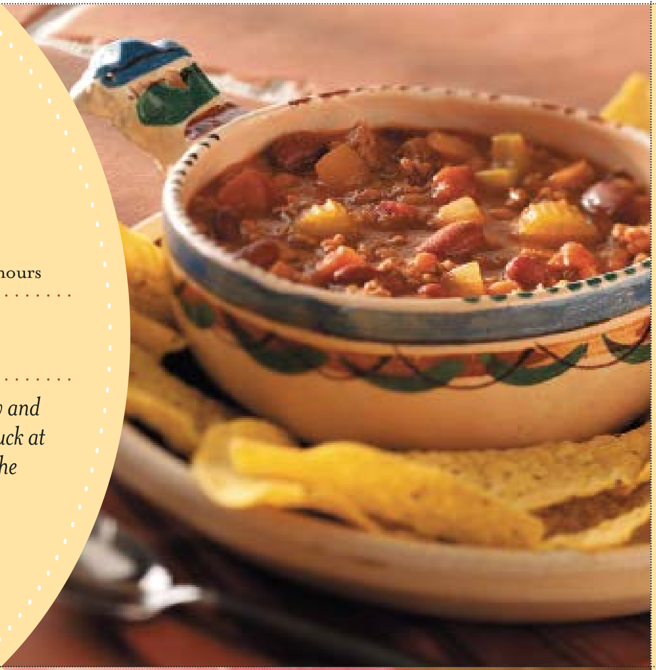
TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Chili for a Crowd

PREP: 20 min. | COOK: 1-1/4 hours

Linda Boehme
Fairmont, Minnesota

A co-worker made this hearty and well-seasoned chili for a potluck at work, and I just had to have the recipe. It freezes nicely, too.



Raisin Loaves

PREP: 30 min. + rising
BAKE: 35 min. + cooling

Vicki Holloway
Joelton, Tennessee

This old-fashioned yeast bread recipe yields three golden loaves, each chock-full of plump raisins. Your guests will be pleased with the homemade flavor and the luscious cinnamon-sugar topping.

Brown Sugar Date Squares

PREP: 25 min. | BAKE: 25 min. + cooling

Suzanne Caithamer
Cincinnati, Ohio

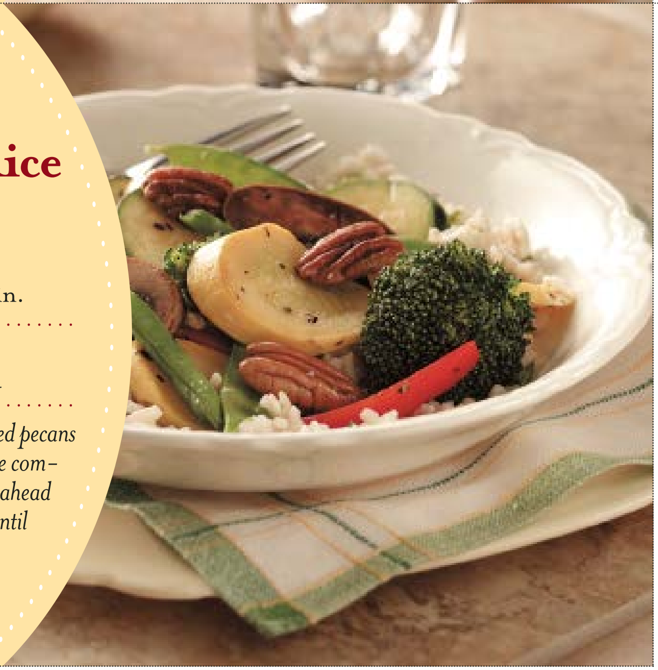
A delicious date filling and crumbly topping have made these bars a long-time favorite. They're wonderful for care packages and holiday cookie exchanges...even people who don't like dates love them!

Pecan Vegetable-Rice Medley

PREP: 25 min. | COOK: 15 min.

★ Patty Kile
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Colorful vegetables and toasted pecans make this a lovely dish to serve company. You can cut the veggies ahead and store in the refrigerator until cooking time.



Brown Sugar Date Squares

- 1 pound pitted whole dates
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2/3 cup orange juice
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract

CRUST:

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- Dash salt
- 1 cup cold butter, cubed
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- Vanilla ice cream, optional

In a small saucepan, combine the dates, brown sugar and orange juice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 3-4 minutes or until thickened and dates are tender, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Cut in butter until crumbly. Press half into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Carefully spread with date mixture.

Stir walnuts into remaining crumb mixture. Sprinkle over filling; press down gently. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into squares. Serve with ice cream if desired. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

TASTE OF HOME
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Pecan Vegetable-Rice Medley

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, *divided*
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 2 cups cut fresh green beans (1-inch pieces)
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, cut into strips
- 1 cup fresh broccoli florets
- 1 small zucchini, sliced
- 1 small yellow summer squash, sliced
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 cup fresh snow peas
- 3 tablespoons water
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups hot cooked brown rice
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil; add pecans. Cook and stir for 3-4 minutes or until lightly toasted; remove and set aside.

In the same skillet, heat the remaining oil. Add the beans, red pepper and broccoli; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the zucchini, yellow squash and mushrooms; stir-fry 2 minutes longer. Add the snow peas, water, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 3-5 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender.

In a large bowl, toss the rice and parsley. Serve vegetables over the rice; top with the toasted pecans. **Yield:** 6 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Chili for a Crowd

- 5 pounds ground beef
- 3 large onions, chopped
- 5 celery ribs, chopped
- 2 cans (28 ounces *each*) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cans (16 ounces *each*) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (28 ounces) pork and beans
- 2 cans (10-3/4 ounces *each*) condensed tomato soup, undiluted
- 2-2/3 cups water
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon *each* dried thyme, oregano and rosemary, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

In a large soup kettle, cook the beef, onions and celery over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 1 hour. **Yield:** 24 servings (1 cup each).

TASTE OF HOME
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Raisin Loaves

- 7 to 8 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup plus 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 packages (1/4 ounce *each*) active dry yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 2 eggs
- 4-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2-1/2 cups raisins
- Melted butter and cinnamon-sugar

In a large mixing bowl, combine 3 cups flour, sugar, yeast and salt. In a small saucepan, heat the milk, water and butter to 120°-130°. Add to dry ingredients; beat until moistened. Add the eggs, vanilla and lemon juice; beat until smooth. Add raisins.

Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky). Do not knead. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Stir dough down. Divide into thirds; place in three greased 8-in. x 4-in. x 2-in. loaf pans. Cover and let rise until almost doubled, about 45 minutes.

Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Brush with melted butter; sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar. Bake 5-10 minutes longer or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool. **Yield:** 3 loaves.

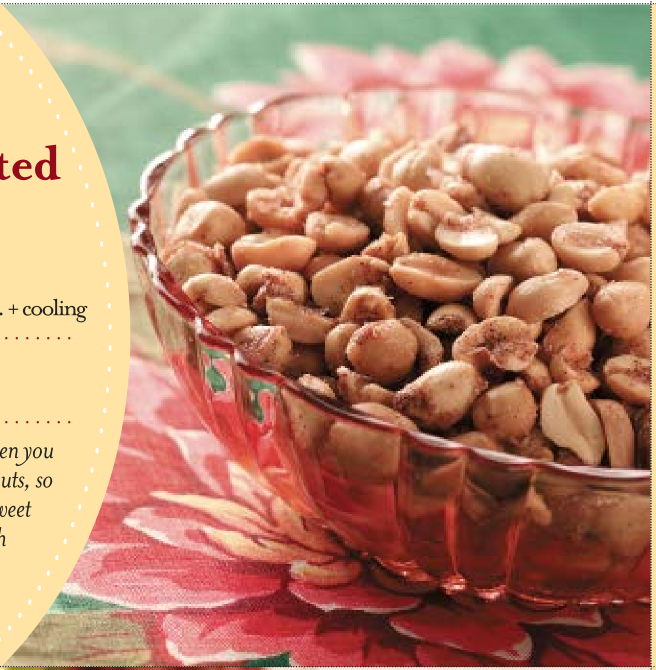
TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Toffee-Coated Peanuts

PREP: 10 min. | BAKE: 20 min. + cooling

Julia Spence
New Braunfels, Texas

A handful is never enough when you serve these mouth-watering nuts, so be sure to make plenty! The sweet toffee coating is enhanced with cinnamon and nutmeg.



Raisin Cashew Drops

PREP: 20 min. + chilling

Cheryl Butler
Lake Placid, Florida

At Christmas, I serve these bite-size chocolates in festive paper cups decorated with snowmen or Santas. They're easy to make, and my family loves the combination of salty and sweet.

Cranberry Fluff

PREP: 20 min. + chilling

Tena Huckleby
Greenville, Tennessee

This tangy pink fluff gets "crunch" from chopped apples and nuts. It's terrific as a salad or dessert, and it keeps well in the refrigerator. I serve any leftovers with sandwiches the next day.

Noodle Pudding

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 25 min.

Eileen Meyers
Scott Township, Pennsylvania

Whenever I bring this creamy dish to gatherings, it always prompts recipe requests. The surprising sweet taste comes from apricot nectar, and everyone enjoys the golden buttery topping.

Cranberry Fluff

- **4 cups fresh *or* frozen cranberries**
- **3 cups miniature marshmallows**
- **3/4 cup sugar**
- **2 cups finely chopped apples**
- **1/2 cup green grapes, quartered**
- **1/2 cup chopped walnuts**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped**

Place cranberries in a food processor; cover and process until finely chopped. Transfer to a large bowl; stir in marshmallows and sugar. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Just before serving, stir in the apples, grapes, walnuts and salt. Fold in the whipped cream. **Yield:** 10 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Noodle Pudding

- **7-1/2 cups uncooked wide egg noodles**
- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- **6 tablespoons butter, softened**
- **1/2 cup sugar**
- **3 eggs**
- **1 cup milk**
- **1 cup apricot nectar**

TOPPING:

- **1 cup cornflake crumbs**
- **1/2 cup sugar**
- **6 tablespoons butter, melted**
- **1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

Cook noodles according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, butter and sugar. Beat in eggs. Gradually stir in milk and apricot nectar.

Drain noodles; return to the pan. Add cream cheese mixture and toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish.

Combine the topping ingredients; sprinkle over noodles. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until a thermometer reads 160°. Serve warm. **Yield:** 9 servings.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Toffee-Coated Peanuts

- **1/4 cup sugar**
- **2 tablespoons butter, melted**
- **2 tablespoons corn syrup**
- **1-1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- **2 cups unsalted dry roasted peanuts**

In a large bowl, combine the sugar, butter, corn syrup, cinnamon, salt and nutmeg. Add peanuts; toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan.

Bake at 300° for 20-25 minutes or until bubbly and golden brown, stirring once. Cool on a wire rack; break apart if necessary. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 3 cups.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

Raisin Cashew Drops

- **2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips**
- **1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk**
- **1 tablespoon light corn syrup**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **2 cups coarsely chopped cashews**
- **2 cups raisins**

In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate chips with milk and corn syrup for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla until blended. Stir in cashews and raisins.

Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Refrigerate for 3 hours or until firm. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 2-1/2 pounds.

TASTE OF HOME
December & January 2008

pleasing pumpkin

There are so many ways to enjoy the subtle flavor of pumpkin. You can puree it for luscious soups, bake it in cakes and sweet breads, even toast the delicate seeds.

With so many options, it was simple for us to pick this versatile winter squash for our next recipe contest, "Pumpkin Patch Specialties." The *Taste of Home* judging panel is eagerly awaiting a crop of favorites:

* Do you serve a special pumpkin appetizer that delights your guests? Maybe a dynamite dip or a cheese ball.
* Comforting pumpkin soups and eye-catching salads are great for fall. We're looking for chilies, stews and bisques, pumpkin fluffs and even salads.
* We're hoping to dip into pumpkin butters, toppings, spiced syrups and jellies.
* Pumpkin pancakes and waffles can be very soothing on chilly days. Our judges also crave tender muffins, yeast breads, scones and rolls.
* From rich cheesecakes and pies to family-favorite bars and cookies, which pumpkin desserts are your favorites?

Your favorite pumpkin recipe could harvest $500!

The "Pumpkin Patch Specialties" contest closes on *February 15, 2008*. Winners will be featured in the Oct/Nov '08 issue. So start picking your favorite pumpkin recipes to enter soon.

Last Chance to Enter

Mamma mia! The deadline for our "Italian Favorites" is on *December 20, 2007*. Winners will be featured in the Aug/Sept '08 issue. So send your *magnifico* recipes now.

Our mouths are watering for garlic, mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, Parmesan...or any other ingredients that enhance your favorite Italian pasta dishes, entrees, appetizers, pizzas or salads. Be sure to include scrumptious desserts...gelato, cannoli, tiramisu and biscotti immediately come to mind.

Enter on our Web site or E-mail entries to *recipes@tasteofhome.com*. Please write "Italian Favorites" on the subject line and include your name and street address. Or send to "Italian Favorites," Diane Werner, Food Director, 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129.

CONTEST RULES

Be sure to include the contest topic and your name, address and phone number on each recipe you submit.

It's easy to enter at *www.tasteofhome.com.*

Click on "Submit a Recipe" to find a handy form with space for the contest title ("Pumpkin Patch Specialties"), ingredients, directions and comments. Be specific with measurements and sizes of cans, packages and pans. Please include a few words about the recipe and yourself.

Or, type or print each recipe on one side of an 8-1/2- x 11-inch sheet of paper. Send entries to "Pumpkin Patch Specialties," Diane Werner, Food Director, 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129. Remember to include your name, address and phone number on each entry.

Entries become the property of Reiman Publications. Recipes that are not among the winners may be published in a future issue of *TOH*, a cookbook or on our Web site (*www.tasteofhome.com*).

Oops! The "Italian Favorites" contest closes on December 20, 2007. An incorrect deadline date was listed in the Oct/Nov issue. Sorry!

You could be a TV star!

The Grand Prize winner will receive $500 in cash. Second place wins dinner for four at the restaurant of the winner's choice. Ten runners-up will receive a free copy of our *Contest Winning Annual Recipes 2008* cookbook.

Plus, one of our winners may be selected to appear on national television with *Taste of Home* Editor in Chief Catherine Cassidy. *The Early Show* on CBS gives viewers a "taste of home" by spotlighting some of the delicious prize-winners in our national recipe contests.

Baker's Haven

Her kitchen's a flurry of activity, especially at holidays.

By Cheryl Barkalow
Germantown, Ohio

For someone who cooks as much as I do, my kitchen is a treasure. It offers lots of room for the things I enjoy most: baking and entertaining. The 26- by 27-foot kitchen/dining area is also a "cool" spot for my children, Amy, 16, and Chase, 11, to hang out with their friends and enjoy some of Mom's home cooking.

That's why my family couldn't live without the large peninsula that divides this room. My kids do their homework here, and it provides seating for guests to relax and chat while I'm cooking. It's also a wonderful work space for baking.

Cookie Queen

Even though I have been teaching for 23 years (12 in home economics), I manage to cook and bake almost every day. I'm known for my cookies and have homemade cookies available at all times. The top request is for my cutout sugar cookies...and not just at Christmas! My nieces and nephews like to come over to Aunt Cheryl's to help make winter snowflakes, spring flowers and other designs. It's been a tradition, even before Amy and Chase were born. Sometimes, we'd have 10 kids around the table. There was icing, flour and sprinkles everywhere, but

it didn't bother me. That's what sweet memories are made of.

Baking wouldn't be as easy without my double oven. And with all that baking comes lots of cleanup! My triple sinks are definitely a plus. I can wash dishes in one, air-dry them in another and still

And you should see my walk-in pantry! It holds tons of cookie cutters, jars and jars of sprinkles, extra appliances, canned vegetables and more.

The caramel-colored cabinets look beautiful against the wheat-colored walls, accented in deep burgundy and gold. Those colors and the plaid wallpaper border with sunflowers give my kitchen an inviting country flair.

The kitchen was designed to accommodate my collections of baskets, bowls,

ing the holidays, our Christmas tree.

A vaulted ceiling connects the kitchen and dining room, and durable oak flooring flows through the entire area. Two sets of French doors in the dining room usher guests to the patio, where we often have meals on warmer days. They also allow us to watch the snow fall in winter, a real treat at Christmastime.

Holiday Spirit

I love decorating at this time of year. I

Truly, my heart is where it belongs... in the kitchen!

Cheryl Barkalow's kitchen and dining room offer plenty of space for cooking and entertaining. The dining area (above) houses a large threshing table near two sets of French doors. During the holidays, it showcases the family's Christmas tree. The large peninsula (far left) is a spot where Cheryl's children, Amy and Chase (left, shown with their mom), do their homework.

have the middle sink available. The window over the sink faces the front of the house, so I gaze out at the fields and farmhouses across the road. Our home is nestled in the middle of 86 acres, and we have two barns for raising sheep.

Cupboard Convenience

The spacious oak cabinets have all the efficiencies an avid cook could want...a revolving spice cabinet, two lazy Susans, two cookie sheet cabinets, an appliance garage, roll-out drawers, a two-trash-can sliding drawer and a cookbook shelf.

jars and tins above the cabinets. Many items are precious antiques from family members. The adjacent dining room is roomy enough to hold some of my larger antiques, including a Hoosier cupboard and a china cupboard.

My grandmother's threshing table, which seats 14, also fits in the dining area along with a smaller table and, dur-

created all the ornaments—110 in all—for our tree and made the rag garland, plaid bows and log cabin tree skirt.

Beside the tree is my standing wooden Santa. I also painted wooden Santa stars and place them in a cluster of crock bowls or between antique cookie cutters. For the dining tables, I made a stuffed reindeer and snowman plus wooden block snowman candleholders.

It's so enjoyable to intermingle homemade decorations with my treasured family items. Truly, my heart is where it belongs...in the kitchen!

*To view a floor plan of this kitchen, go to **www.tasteofhome.com/plus**.*

Share your Christmas kitchen. If you deck your kitchen for the holidays, or know someone who goes all out, please submit details and color photos. If we feature your kitchen or one you suggest, we'll pay you $75. For Contributor Guidelines, see page 62.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT HOCK

classic comfort

Recipes can be found on page 33

FIELD EDITOR:
Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

FAMILY:
Merle and husband Darrell have two grown sons each and five grandchildren between them.

JOB:
Merle works full-time as an insurance broker. Darrell is a heavy-equipment operator at a coal company.

ACTIVITIES:
Elkford Public Library board. "We do many food-related fund-raisers and thank-you dinners for volunteers."

HOBBIES:
Member of a creative writing group.

For holidays and special occasions, I plan a dinner that's hearty and comforting, but also a cut above an everyday meal. I've served these favorite foods for New Year's Eve, for my husband, Darrell's, and my anniversary and for birthdays—they never fail to please.

On the menu are Chicken Cordon Bleu, Bacon 'n' Cheese Stuffed Potatoes, Mixed Bean Salad, Sweet Milk Dinner Rolls and Lemon Meringue Pie. (You'll find the recipes opposite and on page 33.)

Slices of Chicken Cordon Bleu look so attractive shingled on a platter or individual plates. This traditional but elegant entree picks up such good flavor from the ham and Swiss cheese filling.

Bacon 'n' Cheese Stuffed Potatoes are delicious with the chicken. You can prep them early and just pop them in the oven when it's time.

I'm a dump-and-pour cook a lot of the time. Although I know what the ingredients are, often I'm not sure how much of each goes in. But I do stray off the beaten path on occasion to try a new recipe or do a special dinner like the one I'm sharing here.

Lumberjack-Size Buns!

A nice addition to any meal, Sweet Milk Dinner Rolls are a variation of a recipe I got from the mother of a childhood friend.

There's a funny story that goes with this recipe: When I was young and first married (the first time around), I didn't realize how much the buns would rise. My then husband said he was embarrassed eating those huge "bunwiches" on his lunch break at the local sawmill. I told him he was likely the envy of the lumber pile!

Mixed Bean Salad—another dish that can be made ahead—is great for anything from a barbecue to a fancy dinner. My friend Jennette used to bring this salad to the company golf tournament and potlucks when we worked together some years ago.

My mom is 87, and when she is invited somewhere for dinner, she brings one of her homemade pies. Her Lemon Meringue Pie has always been my choice.

Deeply Rooted in B.C.

I was born in the West Kootenay Mountains, and in 1967, our home was flooded out when BC Hydro built the High Arrow Dam (sold us down the river, we say). With heavy hearts and in order to make a financial and emotional recovery, a few families moved to the Queen Charlotte Islands, where we made new friends and a new life and stayed for 7 years.

As an adult, I lived in northwestern British Columbia for 25 years. Then, 7 years ago, I moved to Elkford, a picturesque open-pit coal mining community in the southeastern part of the province.

I met Darrell here in Elkford. We enjoy camping. For our first trip—to a remote lake for 2 weeks—he filled his travel trailer's small freezer with meat.

I couldn't figure out how to keep bread and buns fresh for that length of time. So I opted to bring a can of yeast and a bag of flour instead. I'd never baked in a travel trailer— let alone camped in one. But I surprised myself and impressed my husband with my fresh baked goods!

As you can see, I'm just an everyday person who likes to cook…and I'm happy to be a *Taste of Home* field editor. Hope you'll enjoy my favorite meal!

By Merle Dyck
Elkford, British Columbia

I'm a dump-and-pour cook a lot of the time. Although I know what the ingredients are, often I'm not sure how much of each goes in.

Bacon 'n' Cheese Stuffed Potatoes

PREP: 1-1/4 hours
BAKE: 30 min.

- **4** medium baking potatoes
- **1/4** cup butter, cubed
- **1** cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- **1** cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- **4** bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- **3** to 4 green onions, sliced

Bake potatoes at 400° for 1 hour or until tender. Cool slightly. Reduce heat to 350°.

Cut each potato in half lengthwise. Scoop out pulp, leaving thin shells. In a large mixing bowl, mash the pulp with butter. Stir in the sour cream, cheese, bacon and onions. Spoon or pipe into potato shells.

Place on a baking sheet. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until heated through. **Yield:** 8 servings.

MIXED BEAN SALAD

CHICKEN CORDON BLEU

SWEET MILK DINNER ROLLS

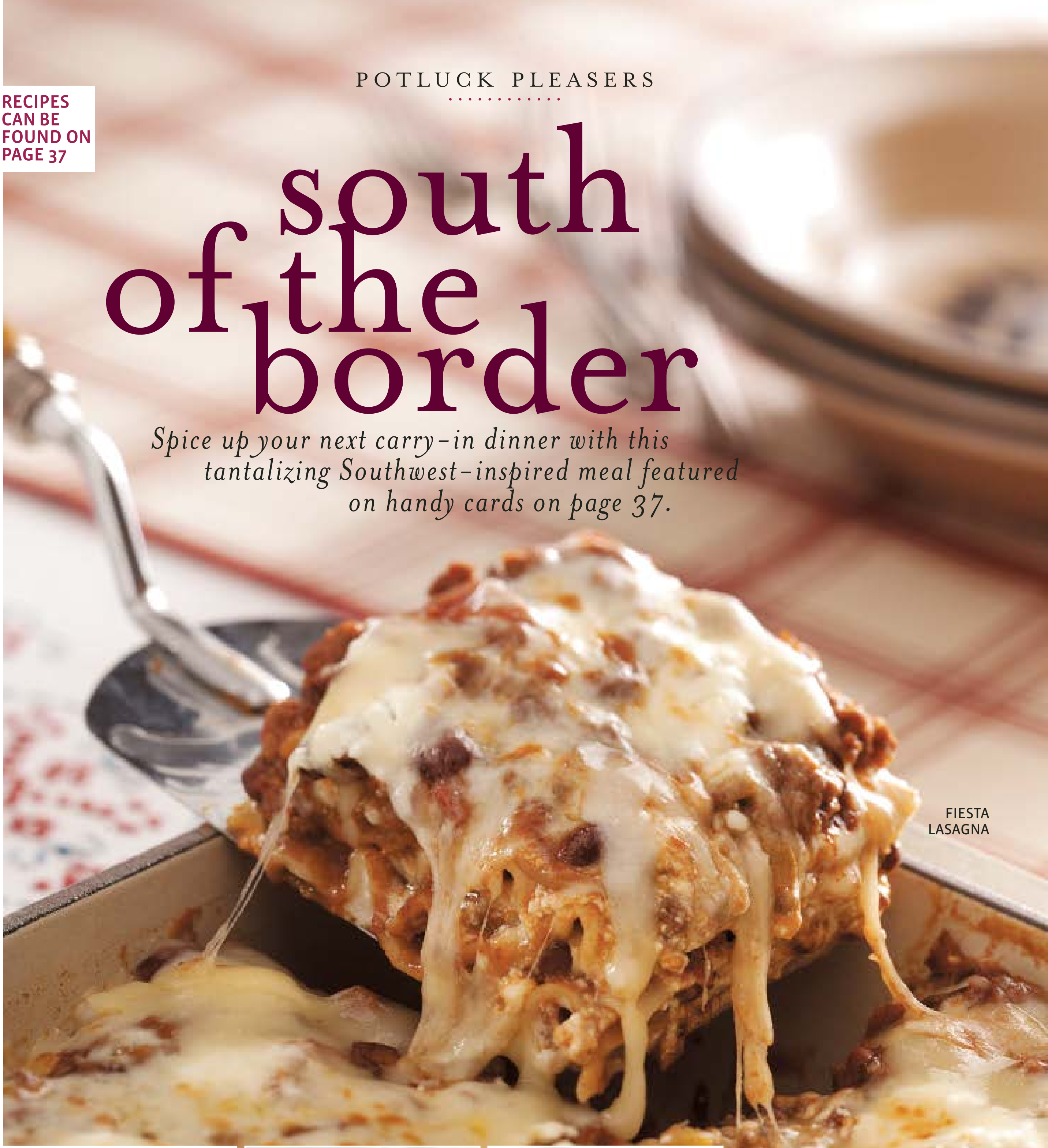
LEMON MERINGUE PIE

RECIPES CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 37

POTLUCK PLEASERS

south of the border

Spice up your next carry-in dinner with this tantalizing Southwest-inspired meal featured on handy cards on page 37.



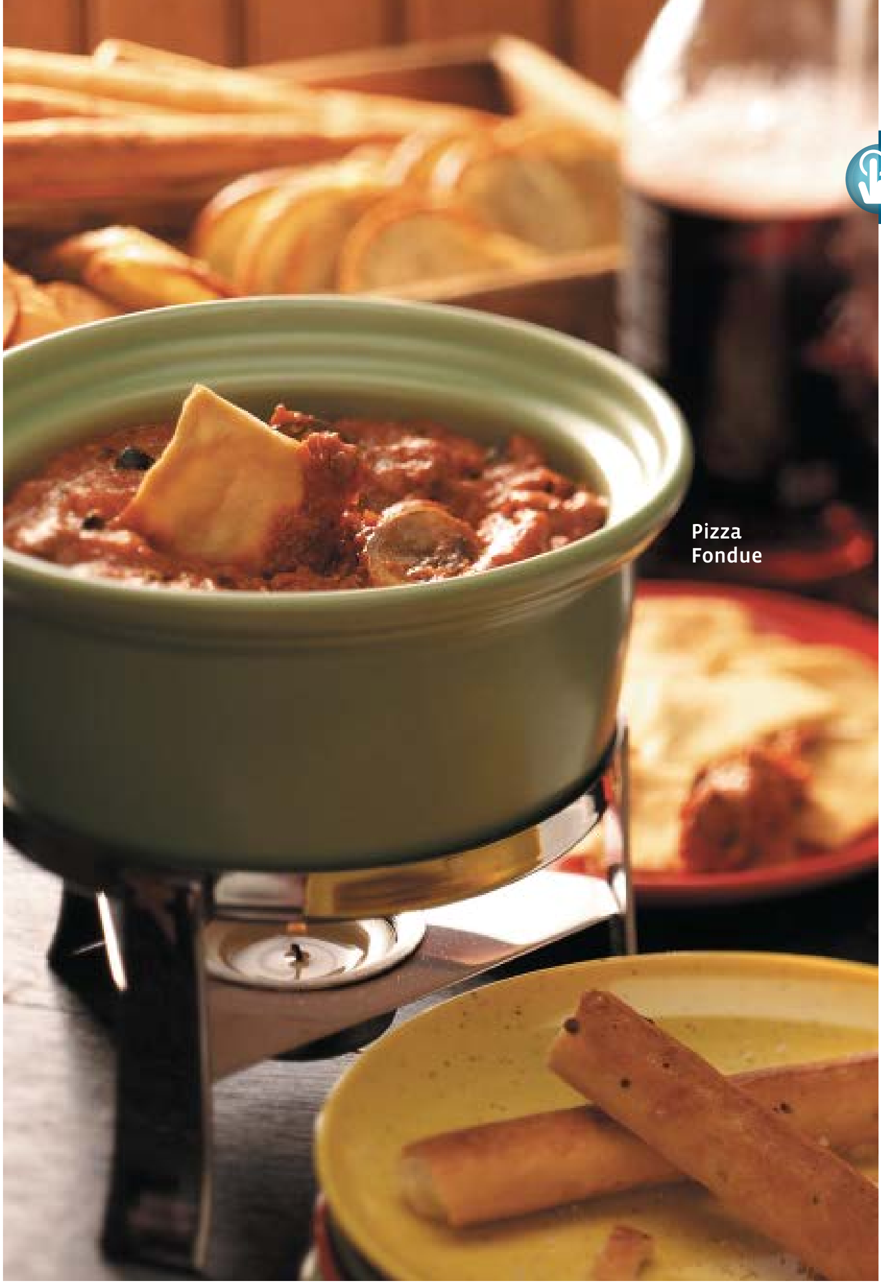
FIESTA LASAGNA

CRACKED PEPPER CHEDDAR MUFFINS

CREAMY CORN SALAD

PURPLE-RIBBON PUMPKIN CAKE

*Pass the Word! Share potluck tips and recipes at **www.tasteofhome.com**.*



Pizza Fondue

FAN-TASTIC FONDUE!

Pump up the volume for the next big game with these hot dip recipes that are sure to please the crowd!

Pizza Fondue

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 min.

Margaret Schissler
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"Great for a party or game-day gathering, this hearty appetizer can be made with Italian sausage instead of ground beef if you prefer. Add a little more pizza sauce if the mixture seems too thick."

DIP IT!
For more unbeatable fondue recipes, visit *www.tasteofhome.com/plus*.

- **1/2 pound ground beef**
- **1 cup chopped fresh mushrooms**
- **1 medium onion, chopped**
- **1 garlic clove, minced**
- **1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons fennel seed**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons dried oregano**
- **1/4 teaspoon garlic powder**
- **2 cans (15 ounces *each*) pizza sauce**
- **2-1/2 cups (10 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese**
- **1 cup (4 ounces) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese**
- **2 tablespoons chopped ripe olives**

Breadsticks, bagel chips, baked pita chips *and/or* tortilla chips

In a large skillet, cook the beef, mushrooms, onion and garlic over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in the cornstarch, fennel, oregano and garlic powder until blended. Stir in pizza sauce.

Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1-2 minutes or until thickened. Gradually stir in cheeses until melted. Stir in olives. Transfer to a fondue pot or warmer and keep warm. Serve with breadsticks, bagel chips, pita chips and/or tortilla chips. **Yield:** 5-1/2 cups.

Super Sausage Dip

PREP: 15 min. COOK: 35 min.

Kaye Christiansen
Freistatt, Missouri

"This scrumptious snack will go fast! The recipe is so easy and delivers popular Southwestern flavor to a T."

- **1 pound bulk pork sausage**
- **1 small onion, chopped**
- **1/2 cup chopped green pepper**
- **3 medium tomatoes, chopped**
- **1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies**
- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, cubed**
- **2 cups (16 ounces) sour cream**

Tortilla chips

In a large skillet, cook the sausage, onion and green pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain.

Add tomatoes and chilies; mix well. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add cream cheese; stir until melted. Stir in sour cream. Transfer to a fondue pot and keep warm. Serve with tortilla chips. **Yield:** 5 cups.

Food for Thought: It has been well said that a hungry man is more interested in four sandwiches than four freedoms. —Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.

*Cannot be combined with any other offers.

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Enjoy the splendor of autumn on the beautiful Ohio River! You'll feast your eyes on color-drenched hills, breathtaking bluffs and quaint river towns. Don't forget your camera!

Discover the past at West Virginia's Point Pleasant River Museum and tour the Revolutionary War battle site of Fort Randolph. You'll also visit the charming capital city of Charleston and take a dramatic motorcoach ride through the New River Gorge in West Virginia.

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favorite grace

Often, table prayers are handed down in families. Other times, they are made up on the spot and strike a chord. These prayers reflect how readers give thanks for their "daily bread" and other blessings.

"I taught my 5-year-old grandson this prayer that I learned as a child," says Grace Cook of Houston, Texas. "He had it down perfectly after repeating it several times and said the grace at our family Thanksgiving dinner."

For home and love and all things true, we give our thanks, O God, to You. For food that's sent to us each day. Accept this grace, we now say, and make us safe by night and day. Amen.

From Rosamond, California, Carol Van Gelder says, "My grandson, Markell Williams, and I wrote this prayer together when he decided he had outgrown a shorter mealtime blessing."

Lord, thank You for the food we eat. Keep us strong from head to feet. As we go to work or play, keep us safe along the way. Amen.

"When I am asked to say grace at friends' homes, I use this prayer," writes Robert Kamps of Timonium, Maryland.

Dear Lord, thank You for all the blessings You have given us this day, and thank You for our family and friends. And, Lord, as Thou did bless the loaves and fishes, bless this food upon our dishes. And, like the sugar in our tea, may all of us be stirred by Thee. Amen.

PRAY TELL. Share your family's favorite grace. For Contributor Guidelines, see page 62.

SECRET INGREDIENT

Readers share the special ways they add pizzazz to everyday recipes.

Pleasing Pie

To add flavor to my sugar-free pumpkin pie, I brush sugar-free syrup on top after the pie comes out of the oven.

—Dolores Nicholson
New Albany, Indiana

Super Coleslaw

A good friend taught me how to make ordinary coleslaw extraordinary: To your favorite slaw recipe, add celery seed and angel hair pasta that's been cooked, drained and rinsed in cold water. The slaw always goes fast!

—Betty Boone
Rutherfordton, North Carolina

Magic Mac and Cheese

When my granddaughters come to visit, they always ask for macaroni and cheese...and remind me to include the "magic" ingredient: a dash of Liquid Smoke. It really gives "mac and cheese" a special flavor.

—Ralph Wolford
Findlay, Ohio

Very Cherry

I like to spruce up canned light cherry pie filling with 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/4 teaspoon almond extract. These additions really bring out the flavor of the cherries.

—Margaret McNeil
Germantown, Tennessee

Tender Chicken

I had always marinated chicken in Italian dressing to give it a kick on the grill. Then I asked a waiter at a Mexican restaurant how they made their grilled chicken so tender and moist. He said that they marinate it in pineapple juice. So now I combine pineapple juice with the dressing in my marinade, and I always have the best-tasting grilled chicken!

—David Balsinger
Harker Heights, Texas

Spiced-Up Sauce

To give my spaghetti sauce a tasty twist, I sprinkle in a little ground allspice.

—Kathy Peters
North Versailles, Pennsylvania

Surprise Cookies

When making oatmeal raisin cookies, I use chocolate-covered raisins instead of plain. Kids love 'em!

—Kami Crum
Reedley, California

Cheesy Tuna Salad

My relatives were surprised—and pleased—to find that my tuna salad contained Parmesan cheese. I mix a small amount with the mayonnaise.

—Patty Gardner
Altoona, Wisconsin

Fruity French Toast

When I make French toast, I stir into the batter a dash of orange juice and orange zest. They add a lovely citrus tang.

—Weda Moselle
Phillipsburg, New Jersey

Food for Thought: Advice is something people give by the bushel but take by the grain.

Sweeter Potatoes

Before baking, I add a can of apricot nectar and some chopped, dried apricots to the brown-sugar-and-butter glaze for sweet potatoes. It makes a lovely side dish for company.

—Tiffany Taylor
St. Petersburg, Florida

What ingredient do you add to spark up everyday foods? To share your "secret," go to *www.tasteofhome.com* or see our Contributor Guidelines on page 62.

an appetizing New Year's Eve

Chicken Mushroom Melts, Fruited Feta Spread and Pork 'n' Shrimp Spring Rolls

Get out the noisemakers, gather your friends and count down to 2008 with these tasty finger foods and a little bubbly!

Chicken Mushroom Melts

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

Sandra Futros
Dugald, Manitoba

"These cheesy melts make hearty party appetizers. On busy weeknights, I like to serve them with a salad for a satisfying meal."

- 1-1/4 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 pound medium fresh mushrooms, quartered
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 16 slices French bread (1 inch thick)
- 1-1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook chicken and mushrooms in oil for 5 minutes. Stir in soy sauce; cook 7 minutes longer. Stir in cream; simmer for 4-6 minutes or until sauce is thickened (do not boil).

In a small bowl, combine butter and garlic; spread over bread. Place buttered side up on an ungreased baking sheet. Broil 4-6 in. from the heat for 2-3 minutes.

Top each slice with 1/4 cup chicken mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Broil for 1-2 minutes or until the cheese is melted. **Yield:** 16 appetizers.

Fruited Feta Spread

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 min.

★ Lucille Terry
Frankfort, Kentucky

This chunky feta and cream cheese spread has a pleasing touch of sweetness. It's sure to be popular at your party!

- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- **1 package (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese**
- **1 cup seedless red grapes, diced**
- **1 large tart apple, diced**
- **3/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted**
- **1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimientos, drained**
- **1/4 cup mayonnaise**
- **3 tablespoons honey**
- **2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**
- **Assorted crackers**

In a small mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and feta until smooth. Stir in the grapes, apple, pecans, pimientos, mayonnaise, honey and parsley. Chill until serving. Serve with crackers. **Yield:** 4 cups.

Cake and Fruit Kabobs

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

Robin Spires
Tampa, Florida

"I've served these fun kabobs at many parties. You can use any combination of fruits you like, depending on what's in season. The thick chocolate sauce has just the right hint of orange."

- **1 large red apple, cut into 16 chunks**
- **1 large green apple, cut into 16 chunks**
- **1 large firm banana, cut into eight chunks**
- **2 tablespoons lemon juice**
- **16 fresh strawberries**
- **8 seedless red grapes**
- **8 seedless green grapes**
- **3 slices pound cake, cut into 1-inch cubes**

SAUCE:

- **1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips**
- **2/3 cup sweetened condensed milk**
- **1/4 cup orange juice**

In a small bowl, combine apples and banana; add lemon juice and toss gently. Thread fruit and cake alternately onto eight wooden skewers.

For sauce, in a microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips and milk. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 1 minute; stir. Microwave 15-45 seconds longer or until chips are melted and mixture is smooth, stirring every 15 seconds. Stir in orange juice. Serve with kabobs. **Yield:** 8 servings (1 cup sauce).

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested in a 1,100-watt microwave.

Pork 'n' Shrimp Spring Rolls

PREP: 1 hour | COOK: 5 min. per batch

★ Debbie Wilkerson
Lusby, Maryland

Give your appetizer table an Asian accent with these crisp spring rolls. The recipe makes a big batch, so guests can enjoy seconds!

- **1 pound ground pork**
- **1 can (14 ounces) bean sprouts, drained**
- **1 can (8 ounces) bamboo shoots, drained and chopped**
- **1/2 pound cooked medium shrimp, peeled, deveined and finely chopped**
- **1 can (4 ounces) mushroom stems and pieces, drained and chopped**
- **4 green onions, chopped**
- **1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- **3 tablespoons soy sauce**
- **1 tablespoon water**
- **1 teaspoon garlic powder**
- **1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- **2 packages (12 ounces *each*) wonton wrappers**
- **Oil for deep-fat frying**
- **Sweet-and-sour sauce**

In a large skillet, cook pork over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Stir in the bean sprouts, bamboo shoots, shrimp, mushrooms and onions.

In a small bowl, whisk the cornstarch, soy sauce, water, garlic powder and oil until smooth; stir into skillet. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1 minute or until thickened. Remove from the heat.

Position a wonton wrapper with one point toward you. (Keep remaining wrappers covered with a damp paper towel until ready to use.) Place 2 heaping teaspoons of filling in the center of wrapper. Fold bottom corner over filling; fold sides toward center over filling. Roll toward the remaining point. Moisten top corner with water; press to seal. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling.

In an electric skillet or deep-fat fryer, heat oil to 375°. Fry spring rolls, a few at a time, for 1-2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm with sweet-and-sour sauce. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

Bubbly Cranberry Punch

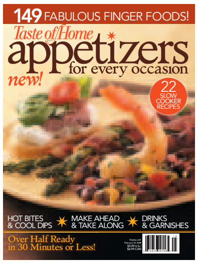
PREP/TOTAL TIME: 10 min.

★ Rebecca Cook Jones
Henderson, Nevada

"My mother-in-law shared this delicious recipe with me." This sparkling nonalcoholic punch lends a festive touch to parties.

- **2 cans (16 ounces *each*) jellied cranberry sauce**
- **1-1/2 cups orange juice**
- **1/2 cup lemon juice**
- **2 bottles (1 liter *each*) ginger ale, chilled**
- **Ice cubes**

In a large pitcher or punch bowl, whisk cranberry sauce until smooth. Whisk in orange and lemon juices. Just before serving, slowly stir in ginger ale. Add ice cubes. **Yield:** 3-1/2 quarts.



Plan the perfect get-together with Taste of Home Appetizers for Every Occasion, *featuring over 140 of the best finger foods from Taste of Home magazine. This 100-page edition is available wherever magazines are sold until*

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Food for Thought: Never laugh at others' coffee—you, too, may be old and weak someday.

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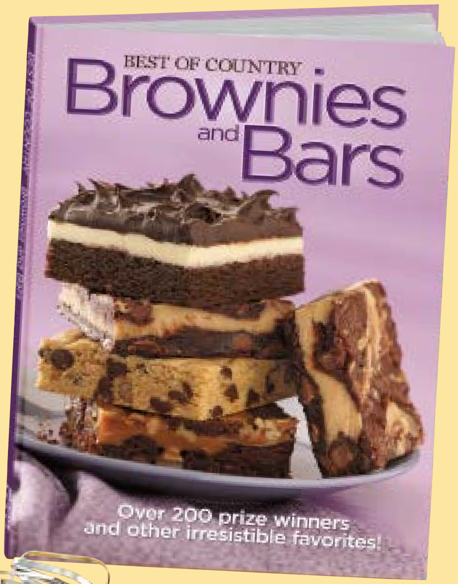

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Sweet Potato Tart

WATCHING WHAT YOU EAT?
Our Recipe Finder at *www.tasteofhome.com* has more than 31,000 recipes with complete Nutrition Facts to help you plan healthy meals.

holiday lites

Feeling guilty about overindulging during the holidays? Then resolve to eat healthier in the New Year (and beyond). The recipes on these pages prove that cooking and eating right can be easy and delicious all year long!

Sweet Potato Tart

PREP: 20 min. | BAKE: 30 min. + cooling

Kate Gaudry
La Jolla, California

"I love making desserts, and by modifying the recipes to reduce the fat, our family can enjoy them more often. You'd never guess this trimmed-down tart, with its homemade pecan crust and creamy filling, is light."

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup cold butter, cubed
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans, toasted
- 1 egg

FILLING:

- 1 can (15-3/4 ounces) sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- 2 egg whites
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

Whipped topping, optional

In a food processor, combine the flour, brown sugar, butter and pecans. Cover and pulse until blended. Add egg, pulsing until mixture forms a soft dough. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9-in. fluted tart pan with removable bottom.

Place pan on a baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack. Reduce heat to 350°.

Drain sweet potatoes, reserving 1/4 cup liquid. Place potatoes in a food processor; cover and process until pureed. Add the brown sugar, milk, egg whites, yogurt, flour, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves and reserved liquid; cover and process until blended.

Pour into crust. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Store in the refrigerator. Garnish with whipped topping if desired. **Yield:** 12 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS: 1 slice (calculated without whipped topping) equals 221 calories, 5 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 29 mg cholesterol, 87 mg sodium, 39 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 4 g protein.

*Here's to Health! Have a dish that's low in fat, sugar or salt? Submit it at **www.tasteofhome.com**.*

Bean Quesadillas

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 min.

Susan Dippel
Macomb, Michigan

"My husband and I created this recipe one night to use up vegetables from our garden; now we make it monthly. The beauty of this recipe is that you can use any vegetables you have on hand."

- **1 can (16 ounces) kidney beans, rinsed and drained**
- **4 flour tortillas (6 inches)**
- **1/2 cup salsa**
- **1/2 cup chopped sweet yellow *or* orange pepper**
- **1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped**
- **1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- **1 cup (4 ounces) shredded reduced-fat Mexican cheese blend**
- **1/8 teaspoon hot pepper sauce**
- **1-1/2 teaspoons minced fresh cilantro**

Mash beans until almost smooth; spread over two tortillas. Layer each with salsa, yellow pepper, jalapeno, garlic, cheese, hot pepper sauce and cilantro. Top with remaining tortillas.

Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Cut each quesadilla into four wedges. **Yield:** 4 servings.

EDITOR'S NOTE: When cutting or seeding hot peppers, use rubber or plastic gloves to protect your hands. Avoid touching your face.

NUTRITION FACTS: 2 wedges equals 285 calories, 9 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 20 mg cholesterol, 748 mg sodium, 34 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 18 g protein. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES:** 2 starch, 2 lean meat, 1 vegetable.

Citrus Tossed Salad

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 min.

★ Edna Coburn
Tucson, Arizona

This appealing fruit and nut salad is crisp, crunchy and nicely tart. It's a colorful choice for a holiday menu, but it tastes fabulous any time of year.

- **1 package (16 ounces) romaine hearts, torn**
- **3 medium navel oranges, peeled and sectioned**
- **2 medium apples, peeled and chopped**
- **1 small grapefruit, peeled and sectioned**
- **1/2 cup pecan halves, toasted**
- **1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves**

DRESSING:

- **1/2 cup unsweetened apple juice**
- **1/4 cup lemon juice**
- **1 tablespoon sugar**
- **1 tablespoon olive oil**
- **1/2 teaspoon salt**
- **1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

In a large salad bowl, combine the romaine, oranges, apples, grapefruit, pecans and cilantro. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the dressing ingredients; shake well. Drizzle over salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 8 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS: 1-3/4 cups equals 133 calories, 7 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 153 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 2 g protein. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES:** 1 vegetable, 1 fruit, 1 fat.

Gooey Pizza Dip

PREP: 10 min. | BAKE: 25 min.

Kitti Boesel
Woodbridge, Virginia

"I serve this cheesy baked dip with breadsticks and wedges of baked Boboli. You can even prepare individual servings in ramekins if you like."

- **1 cup (8 ounces) reduced-fat ricotta cheese**
- **1 cup fat-free mayonnaise**
- **1-1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, *divided***
- **1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- **3/4 cup diced seeded plum tomatoes, *divided***
- **1 can (2-1/2 ounces) sliced ripe olives, drained, *divided***
- **1/4 cup sliced turkey pepperoni**
- **1 teaspoon garlic powder**
- **1 teaspoon Italian seasoning**
- **1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**
- **Assorted crackers**

In a bowl, combine the ricotta, mayonnaise, 1 cup mozzarella, Parmesan cheese, 1/2 cup tomatoes, 6 tablespoons olives, pepperoni, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and pepper flakes.

Spread into a 9-in. pie plate coated with nonstick cooking spray. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until edges are bubbly and top is golden brown. Sprinkle with remaining tomatoes and olives. Serve with crackers. **Yield:** 3 cups.

NUTRITION FACTS: 1/3 cup (calculated without crackers) equals 124 calories, 7 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 25 mg cholesterol, 493 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 9 g protein. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES:** 1 lean meat, 1 fat, 1/2 starch.

Spicy Shrimp

Spicy Shrimp

PREP: 15 min. | COOK: 25 min.

Jeannie Klugh
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

No one will doubt that healthy foods can be tasty when you put a helping of this zippy shrimp in front of them. It's seasoned just right with garlic, pepper and hot sauce.

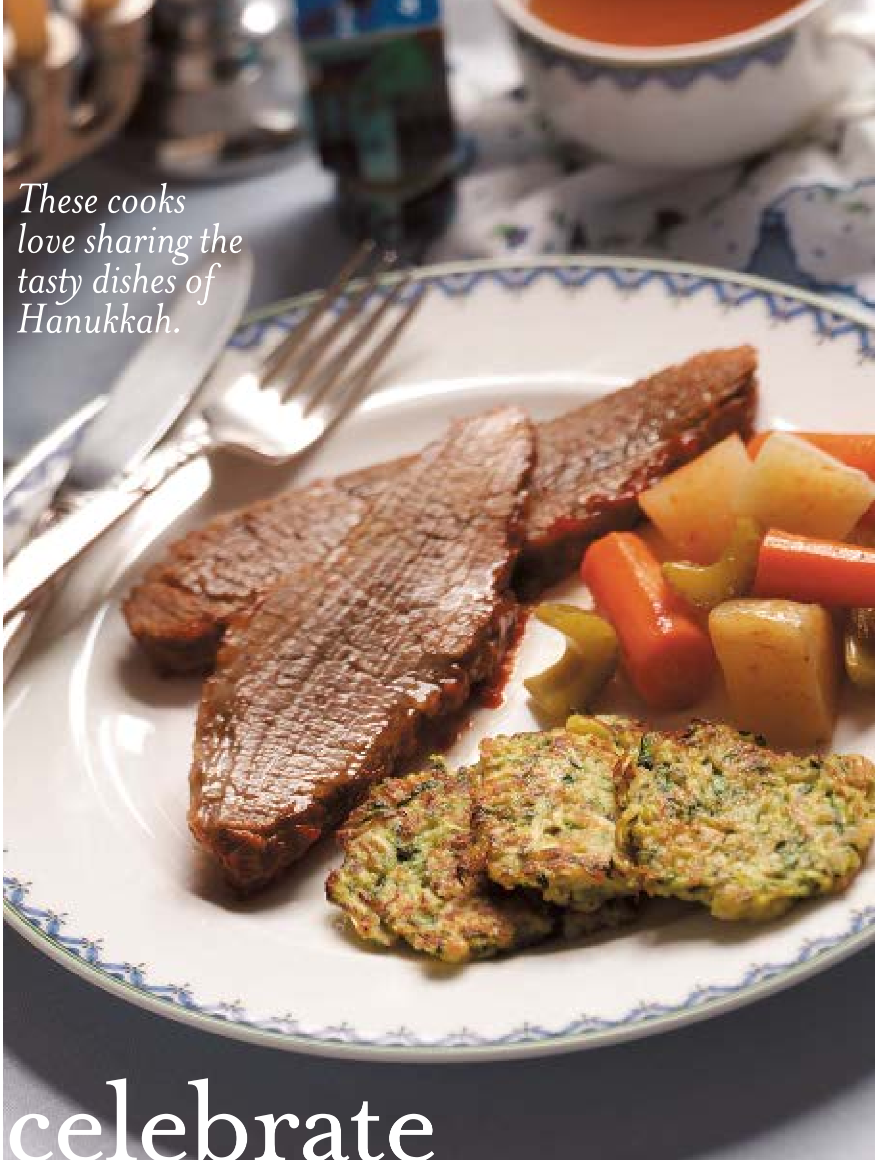
- **1 large onion, finely chopped**
- **1 large green pepper, chopped**
- **3 garlic cloves, minced**
- **1 tablespoon olive oil**
- **1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce**
- **1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth**
- **1/2 cup minced fresh parsley**
- **1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimientos, drained**
- **1 to 2 tablespoons Louisiana-style hot sauce**
- **1/4 teaspoon onion salt**
- **1/4 teaspoon pepper**
- **2 pounds uncooked large shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- **5-2/3 cups hot cooked rice**

In a large skillet, saute the onion, green pepper and garlic in oil until tender. Stir in the tomato sauce, broth, parsley, pimientos, hot sauce, onion salt and pepper.

Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in shrimp; cook 5-7 minutes longer or until shrimp turn pink. Serve with rice. **Yield:** 8 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS: 2/3 cup shrimp mixture with 2/3 cup rice equals 273 calories, 3 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 168 mg cholesterol, 425 mg sodium, 37 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 22 g protein. **DIABETIC EXCHANGES:** 3 very lean meat, 2 starch, 1 vegetable.

go to *tasteofhome.com/plus* for a photo of the recipe



These cooks love sharing the tasty dishes of Hanukkah.

celebrate jewish traditions

When I was a child, my mom would make her Holiday Beef Brisket on Jewish holidays and other special occasions. Everyone gathered around the table to enjoy the tender slices of meat alongside nicely browned carrots and potatoes. Those heartwarming meals evoked camaraderie and love for our family.

Today, I make Mom's recipe for my family. My daughter, Paula, who lives in Baltimore, helps me prepare the brisket when she visits. Sometimes we also make kugel, a luscious noodle pudding covered in apricot preserves. It tastes so good with the savory beef.

If you have leftovers, the meat is excellent for barbecued beef sandwiches and stew.

Holiday Beef Brisket

PREP: 15 min.
BAKE: 2-3/4 hours + standing

Cheryl Bragg
Viola, Delaware

- 2 large onions, sliced
- 1 fresh beef brisket (3 pounds)
- 3/4 cup ketchup
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 1-1/2 cups hot water
- 5 small potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 medium carrots, cut into chunks
- 2 celery ribs, cut into chunks

Place onions in a greased shallow roasting pan; top with brisket. In a small bowl, combine the ketchup, paprika and garlic powder; spread over brisket. Dissolve bouillon in hot water; pour into pan. Cover and bake at 325° for 1-1/2 hours.

Add the potatoes, carrots and celery. Cover and bake 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 hours longer or until meat is tender. Remove brisket to a serving platter; let stand for 15 minutes. Thinly slice meat across the grain. Serve with potatoes, carrots and celery. **Yield:** 6 servings.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a fresh beef brisket, not corned beef. The meat comes from the first cut of the brisket.

My Zucchini Latkes are a delicious variation on the potato latkes traditionally served during Hanukkah.

We make latkes for Hanukkah because they are fried in oil, a symbol of the miracle in the Temple in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. At the time, a tyrannical Greek king was trying to destroy Judaism. But a small army of Jews drove out the king's soldiers and reclaimed the Temple, where priests had only enough pure olive oil to burn for 1 day in the menorah. Miraculously, the oil lasted 8 days.

My husband, Avi, and I carry on this significant tradition with our children, Sara, 10, and Yaakov, 5. This year, Sara is old enough to help make the latkes (the oil can get very hot, so be careful). I serve them with sour cream, cottage cheese and applesauce, plus a salad on the side.

Zucchini Latkes

PREP: 30 min. | COOK: 5 min. per batch

Chava Zaitschek
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

- 3 medium zucchini, shredded (about 4-1/2 cups)
- 1 teaspoon salt, *divided*
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 small onion, grated
- 1/4 cup matzo meal *or* dry bread crumbs
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- Vegetable oil for frying
- Sour cream, optional

In a large bowl, toss zucchini and 1/2 teaspoon salt; let stand for 10 minutes. Squeeze zucchini dry. Stir in the eggs, onion, matzo meal, pepper and remaining salt.

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Drop batter by tablespoonfuls into oil; press lightly to flatten. Fry for 2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Serve with sour cream if desired. **Yield:** 16 latkes.

MEET A TEAM MEMBER:

Marie Parker

When I accepted a position as a home economist at *Taste of Home* last year, my passion for food had come full circle. It began when I toured the Betty Crocker Test Kitchen as a child and brought home a cake mix. Right then, I knew cooking was my thing.

By the age of 12, I was tweaking foods to make them healthier. No one was surprised when I chose a degree in dietetics and took food-related jobs after college. Pursuing a dream, my husband, Andy, and I converted an old Victorian home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin 7 years ago and opened Manderley Bed and Breakfast. Andy runs it full-time, and I help out whenever I can. I especially love serving fabulous brunch and breakfast recipes we've tried in the *Taste of Home* Test Kitchen.

If not at *TOH*, I'm probably at the Manderley (also our home) making panini sandwiches—the current craze—with our teenage sons, Maxwell and Grayson. Turkey Sandwiches with Red Pepper Hummus (right) is one of our favorites.

English Toffee Tips

I'm having trouble making English toffee. Just before the butter, sugar and corn syrup mixture reaches the hard-crack stage, the butter separates from the caramelized sugar, leaving a pool of butter on top of the toffee. My recipe directs me to stir constantly. Can you help?

–Lois Goodrick
Lafayette, Indiana

There are a couple of things you can try to prevent separation:

Make sure your candy thermometer is accurate. We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil. The thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature based on the test.

Be patient. Cooking over heat that's too high can cause separation. Melt the butter over low heat before adding the sugar and corn syrup. Cook and stir constantly over low heat until the mixture reaches 212°. Then cook, without stirring, until it reaches 236°. Then resume stirring constantly until the mixture reaches 290°.

Stirring constantly between 236° and 290° prevents butter from separating. If separation still occurs, the butter can be combined by slowly stirring over low heat. If it is still separated, try adding 1/4 to 1/2 cup of hot water, a tablespoon at a time, while cooking until the separation is corrected.

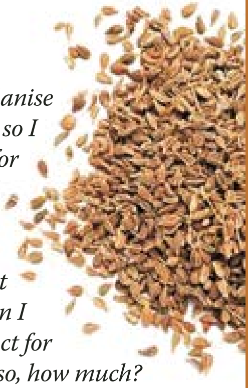
Butterscotch or Burned Sugar

What is the difference between burned (burnt) sugar and butterscotch? Some recipes for butterscotch pie call for brown sugar; others call for melting white sugar and cooking until golden in color.

—Fern Nichol
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Caramelized sugar is also referred to as burned sugar, while the flavor of butterscotch is a combination of butter and brown sugar. Your butterscotch pie recipe that calls for melting sugar is actually caramelizing sugar.

Substitute for Aniseed



I bought a bottle of anise extract by mistake, so I have been looking for recipes to use this ingredient. I've found several that call for aniseed. Is it the same thing? Can I substitute the extract for the aniseed, and if so, how much?

—Erma Martin
East Earl, Pennsylvania

Anise extract is made from aniseeds and can be used as a substitute. One teaspoon of anise extract can be substituted for 2 teaspoons ground aniseeds.

Stumped? If you have a food-related question, feel free to E-mail us at ***editors@tasteofhome.com*** *or send your question to "Ask the Test Kitchen," 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129. For Contributor Guidelines, see page 62.*

Turkey Sandwiches with Red Pepper Hummus

PREP: 20 min. + chilling
COOK: 5 min.

Marie Parker
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"I picked up a little indoor grill at an estate sale. I thought it would be great for a quick chicken breast or the like. When I got it home, the kids looked at it and said 'Panini!!!' We have been making panini sandwiches like crazy! This recipe is a favorite."

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans *or* chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup chopped roasted sweet red peppers, drained
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 8 slices rye bread
- 4 slices Muenster cheese
- 8 thin slices cooked turkey
- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, sliced

For hummus, combine the first seven ingredients in a blender or food processor; cover and process until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl; cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Spread butter on one side of each slice of bread; spread hummus on the other side. Place four slices buttered side down on a griddle. Layer with cheese, turkey, onion, tomatoes and remaining bread, hummus side down. Toast for 2-3 minutes on each side or until bread is lightly browned and cheese is melted. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Food for Thought: There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's rue for you; and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o'Sundays. —William Shakespeare, "Hamlet"

DOES ANYONE HAVE?

Readers looking for recipes turn here for help.

Food for Thought: I am still convinced that a good, simple, homemade cookie is preferable to all the store-bought cookies one can find. —James Beard

Does anyone know how to make an edible peppermint candy basket? I've looked everywhere but can't find the instructions.

Karen Shepard
2164 Warrentown Rd.
Pulaski MS 39152

Does anyone have a recipe for apple caramel walnut pie made with fresh apples? I'd love to receive it.

Mildred Ehrheart
526 Winter Rd.
New Castle PA 16101

I'm looking for an old Southern recipe called Chocolate and Biscuits. My best friend's mother made them every year for Christmas; she poured melted chocolate over biscuits.

Kelly Vail-Slemons
6995 Ford Station
Germantown TN 38138

My Cajun granny made a wonderful molasses pound cake, but I never got the recipe. It's heavy, dark and aromatic. Can anyone help me find this special recipe?

Betty Sherrill
7600 Palmer Hwy. Apt. 403
Texas City TX 77591

I had a delightful sweet potato casserole at Cracker Barrel in Albuquerque. It contains brown sugar and pecans, and it's wonderful. Might you have a similar recipe?

Elaine Young
785 Road 3000
Aztec NM 87410

Does anyone have a recipe for meat filling for pierogies? I cannot find mine and would appreciate another one.

Carol Doyel
369 Laird St.
Mt. Morris MI 48458

I tasted a wonderful treat at a Christmas party called "Chewy Noel." It was rolled in confectioners' sugar. I'd love to have the recipe so I can make this treat for the holidays.

Khris Baker
109 Walnut St.
Pineville KY 40977

I'm trying to find the recipe for sour cherry cookies. It called for sour pie cherries and almond extract. The cookies turned light green while they were baking. With bits of red cherry, this traditional recipe was ideal for Christmas.

Debbie Simpson
11460 Crawford Rd.
Paonia CO 81428

My parents had bees and a lot of honey, and Mother made a delicious honey-chocolate fudge. Would you have this recipe?

Marjorie Bates
1520 E. Fifth Ave.
Mitchell SD 57301

I'm searching for an old Pennsylvania recipe called Leeks Dip. Do you have it?

R. Allen
1224 Paul Martin Dr.
Edgewood MD 21040

Could someone send me a recipe for pumpkin soup?

Leonard Schroeder
6340 Fust Rd.
Gillett WI 54124

Would someone have a recipe for Depression pudding or Depression cake? I remember as a child enjoying chocolate pudding and cake mixed together...maybe with raisins, too.

Jackye Powell
19920 W. Verde Hills Dr.
Wickenburg AZ 85390

My diabetic son considers flavored water a real treat when we buy it at the grocery store. I'd really like to make it at home and perhaps learn a new flavor or two. Might someone have a recipe?

Kim Livingston
10 Glad Tidings Ln.
Lugoff SC 29078

My family and I enjoy making homemade pizza, but we haven't had a lot of luck with the crust. Does anyone have a crust recipe that tastes nearly as good as the pizza parlor's?

The Lee Family
180 Dickerman Rd.
Silex MO 63377

I'd love to surprise my son-in-law, Jose, with homemade cookies from his native Mexico. If you have any recipes you'd like to share, I'd appreciate it.

Debra Fennell
33251 Little Valley Rd.
Fort Bragg CA 95437

If you can answer any of these questions, write directly to the person seeking information. If you have a question, submit it at *www.tasteofhome.com*. Please see Contributor Guidelines on page 62.

Need a quick reply? Because we receive so many requests for this column, it could be quite a while before you see your question in print. So, if you want an answer fast, visit *www.tasteofhome.com* and click on "Bulletin Board." Select a chat room and pose your question. You're bound to get a response in no time!

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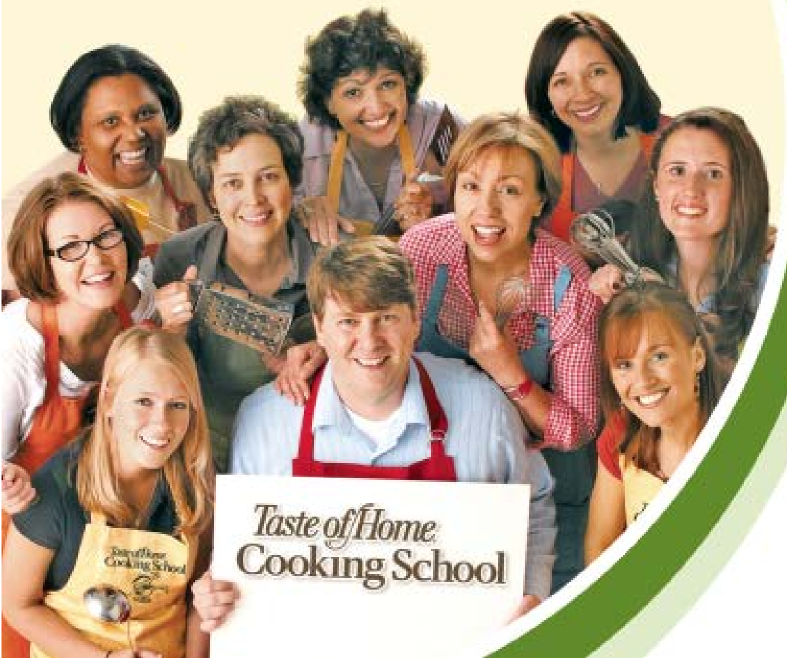

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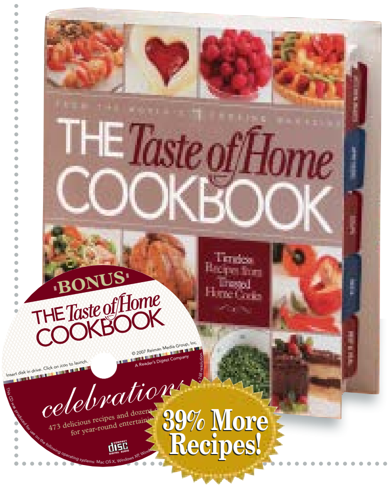

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Springboard into Cooking

When I was first married, I shuddered at the thought of competing with the meals my mother-in-law made. (I never knew anyone who made her own chocolate-covered cherries!) But then I subscribed to *Taste of Home*. It's wonderful!

Because of my new love for cooking, I started a fun tradition with my grandchildren. Here's my grandson, Denver, and me (below), making Christmas cookies from *2005 Taste of Home Annual Recipes*. We put flour on our faces to show everyone how hard we worked. Thanks for helping make memories.

—**Judy Neff**
from *editors@tasteofhome.com*

Christmas Cookie Bonanza

Every year, our family gets together the Sunday after Thanksgiving to bake Christmas cookies. My mother started this tradition when my sisters and I were young, and my cousin and sister-in-law joined right in. Now our children help, too!

Last year, we made over 1,400 cookies, including Sugar Cookie Cutouts and Christmas Shortbread Wreaths from *Taste of Home*. We expect to make even more cookies this year!

—**Mary Altman**
Wexford, Pennsylvania

Cooks Who Care

Many thanks to *Taste of Home* for featuring Apples of Gold in your "Cooks Who Care" column. *TOH* recipes are just perfect for this ministry—they're practical, delicious and beautiful. We try to teach the young women in our classes how to plan a balanced menu, and it's great when they can prepare a total meal right from your magazine. Many thanks.

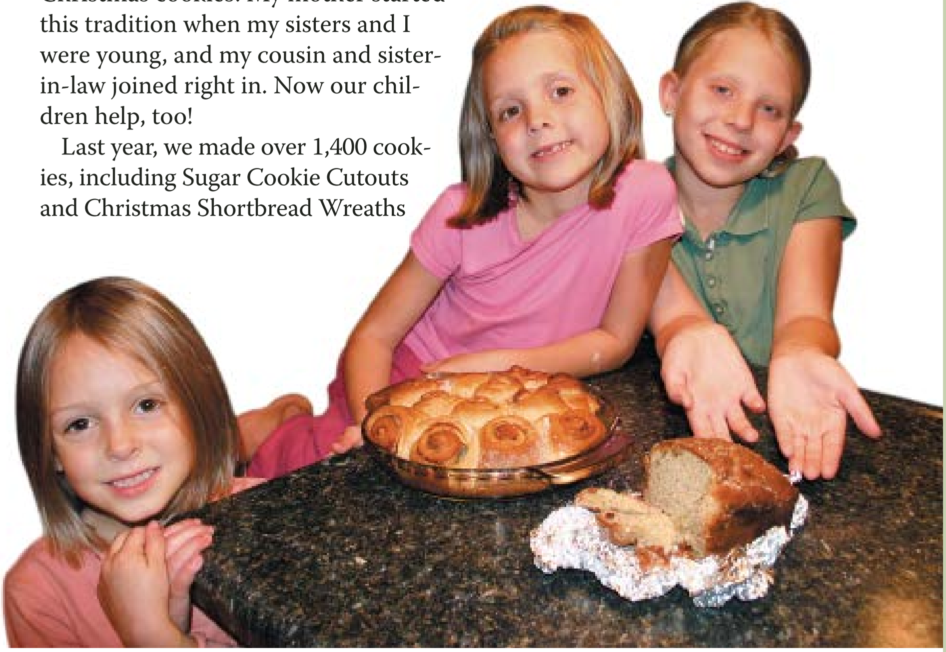
—**Betty Huizenga**
Founder, Apples of Gold
Sanibel, Florida

Editor's Note: *Turn to page 66 to read about a caring cook in Washington state who sends cookies to U.S. troops overseas.*

Rainy-Day Treats

We love *Taste of Home*! One rainy day, it was too cold to play outside, so we had a baking day! My daughters—Riley, 10, Reegan, 7, and Reid, 6 (below)—used recipes from the Oct/Nov issue, including Vanilla Cinnamon Rolls and Special Banana Nut Bread. We hope to try Elegant Chocolate Torte soon!

—**Rhonda Gross**
Fillmore, New York



CONTRIBUTOR GUIDELINES

Want to send in your favorite recipe or handy tip, fun idea or photo to share with other readers? We'd love to hear from you. Here's how to get involved:

1. It's easy to send us recipes and other submissions! Simply use the convenient form on our Web site, ***www.tasteofhome.com***. Or you can E-mail them to ***editors@tasteofhome.com***. If you have a particular department or feature in mind, please type it in the subject line of your E-mail message.

2. When sending recipes, please be specific with directions, measurements and sizes of cans, packages and pans. Also, please share a few words about the recipe and yourself. (For recipe contest entries, please follow the directions on page 43.)

3. After you submit materials, please be patient. Due to the large volume, it can take our small staff several months to review materials. We may hold your material without informing you, but we will let you know if we publish something you submitted. Materials that won't fit in ***Taste of Home*** may be considered for our Web sites, cookbooks, promotions and other publications.

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field editor spotlight

Lori Coulthard

LARAMIE, WYOMING

Family stats: Husband Max; four children, Kara, Kristi, Katie and David. Lori home-schools her children and does bookkeeping for Max, a custom home builder.

"I grew up in a small farming community in Illinois. I began cooking at age 9; my four brothers had to endure many of my experiments.

"I enjoy baking the most in the fall and around the holidays. It's fun to see my family's faces light up when I serve them gooey brownies or a warm piece of pie. I often give baked goods and candy as gifts at Christmas. That's what it's all about...sharing what I love to do with those I love!"

Rita Futral

STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

Family stats: Husband Larry; three children, Steve, Meredith and Greg; and three grandchildren.

"I have conducted cooking classes for young, married women, teaching them how to make recipes such as chicken and dumplings and fried pies. I've also done a Thanksgiving dinner, which the women helped prepare and we all ate together.

"At home, I enjoy preparing fancy meals and like to try new dishes...as well as making old favorites. My husband and I are retired, so when I'm not cooking or doing cross-stitch, I'm participating in activities at church. I also teach Sunday school."

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HIDE & SEEK

Find the Missing Bulb!

You could win one of the prizes shown below!

A colorful bulb from *Taste of Home's* Christmas tree is missing from the string. Can you help us find it?

As many of you know, we like to have a little fun in *TOH* by having you readers search for a hidden drawing.

In the past, it's been a toothpick. But to make things more fitting for the season, we've hidden a Christmas bulb this time. The drawing is hidden somewhere in every copy of this Dec/Jan issue and looks like the bulb shown here (this one is just an example).

The real bulb is hidden elsewhere. It may be tucked in a photo, in a drawing, in an article or in a recipe—and it could be a different size.

Find the bulb and enter the "Hide & Seek" contest on our Web site. Or mail a postcard with the correct page number and your name, address and phone number to Hide & Seek, *Taste of Home*, 5925 Country Lane, Greendale WI 53129. We'll conduct a random drawing in mid-January.

WHERE WAS THAT TOOTHPICK? IN THE OCT/NOV ISSUE, IT WAS HIDDEN ON THE CABINET NEXT TO THE GARDEN WINDOW ON PAGE 52.

Win a Fun Fondue Or Cook's Ornament

Celebrate the Super Bowl in style with Trudeau's Nacho and Chocolate Football Fondue set. The first 50 prize-winners in our Hide & Seek contest can use this triple-duty pot as a traditional cheese/chocolate fondue pot, a chafing dish for cheese dips, or a novelty serving platter for chips and salsa. Suggested retail is $19.99.

The next 30 winners will receive one of these special ornaments from Hallmark. The Do Yourself a Flavor Keepsake Ornament applauds a beloved cook with a mini version of her (or his) work space, while the King of the Grill Keepsake Ornament will get any grilling guru all fired up. Suggested retail is $12.50 each.

Even if your name isn't drawn, you can learn more about how to purchase these items by logging on to **www.tasteofhome.com/links**.

Taste of Home Cooks Who Care

1) Kerry's daughter, Angela (right), a petty officer in the United States Coast Guard Reserve, welcomes home her brother, Jon, from Iraq. 2) Kerry sent the troops Gingerbread Boy Cookies. Find the recipe on our Recipe Finder at *www.tasteofhome.com*. 3) Jon's platoon. 4) Kerry (far left) hosts an annual holiday cookie exchange.

'Cookie Mom' Warms Troops' Hearts

This caring baker makes the holidays a little easier and tastier for U.S. troops in Iraq.

Most know her as Kerry. But to many soldiers, she's "The Cookie Mom."

Since the early 1970s, Kerry Amundson of Ocean Park, Washington, has been sending Christmas cookies to U.S. troops overseas.

"A little taste of home means so much to our soldiers," says Kerry. "Sending cookies is a small way I can show my gratitude."

Last Christmas, Kerry organized a holiday cookie exchange in her neighborhood. She asked her neighbors to consider bringing some extra cookies for the troops.

"Each of the ladies arrived with an extra gallon-size bag of cookies," notes Kerry. "I was overwhelmed with their thoughtfulness."

Kerry contributed dozens of gingerbread men using *Taste of Home's* Gingerbread Boy Cookies recipe. She's found that molasses-type cookies transport well and can survive the extreme heat in Iraq.

One soldier especially grateful for the care packages is Kerry's son, Jonathan, a sergeant in the United States Army Reserve. Jon, 28, recently completed his second tour to Iraq.

"Each time he received a big box of my cookies, Jon would yell out, 'Cookies from home!' and everyone was on him like nobody's business," says Kerry.

When she greeted her son at a welcome-home ceremony last September at Fort Lewis, Kerry handed each of the soldiers in Jon's platoon an Americana basket filled with homemade cookies.

"One of the guys said, 'So this is the Cookie Mom,' Kerry recalls. "They dove right into the baskets and practically inhaled the cookies."

Interested in sending cookies to the troops? See the tips below. For more information on ways you can help support our troops, log on to *www.tasteofhome.com/links*.

Cooking Outreach: If you or a group you belong to cooks for a charitable, spiritual or other purpose, tell us about it at cookswhocare@tasteofhome.com. For Contributor Guidelines, see page 62.

Cookie Care Package Tips

Warm a soldier's heart with a package of homemade cookies. Here are some easy packing tips that will ensure less breakage and fresher flavor.

* Drop, refrigerator and sandwich cookies are fairly sturdy and less likely to break when shipping.
* Drop cookies should be bundled back-to-back in packages of two.
* Some refrigerator cookies can be stacked in threes and then tied with ribbon to make them look special.
* Strong-flavored cookies should be kept separate from milder ones.
* Once your cookies are neatly bundled in plastic wrap, place them in disposable plastic containers lined with crumpled waxed paper.
* Place your cookie containers in a second, larger box that is cushioned by crumpled waxed paper or bubble wrap.
* A friendly letter or greeting is always appreciated.

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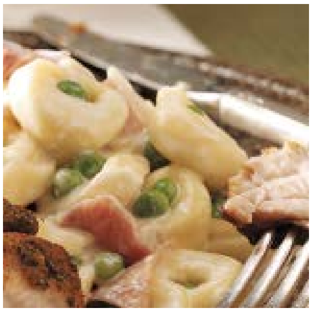
Recipe includes Nutrition Facts

Check Nutrition Facts for other *Taste of Home* recipes using the Recipe Finder at ***www.tasteofhome.com***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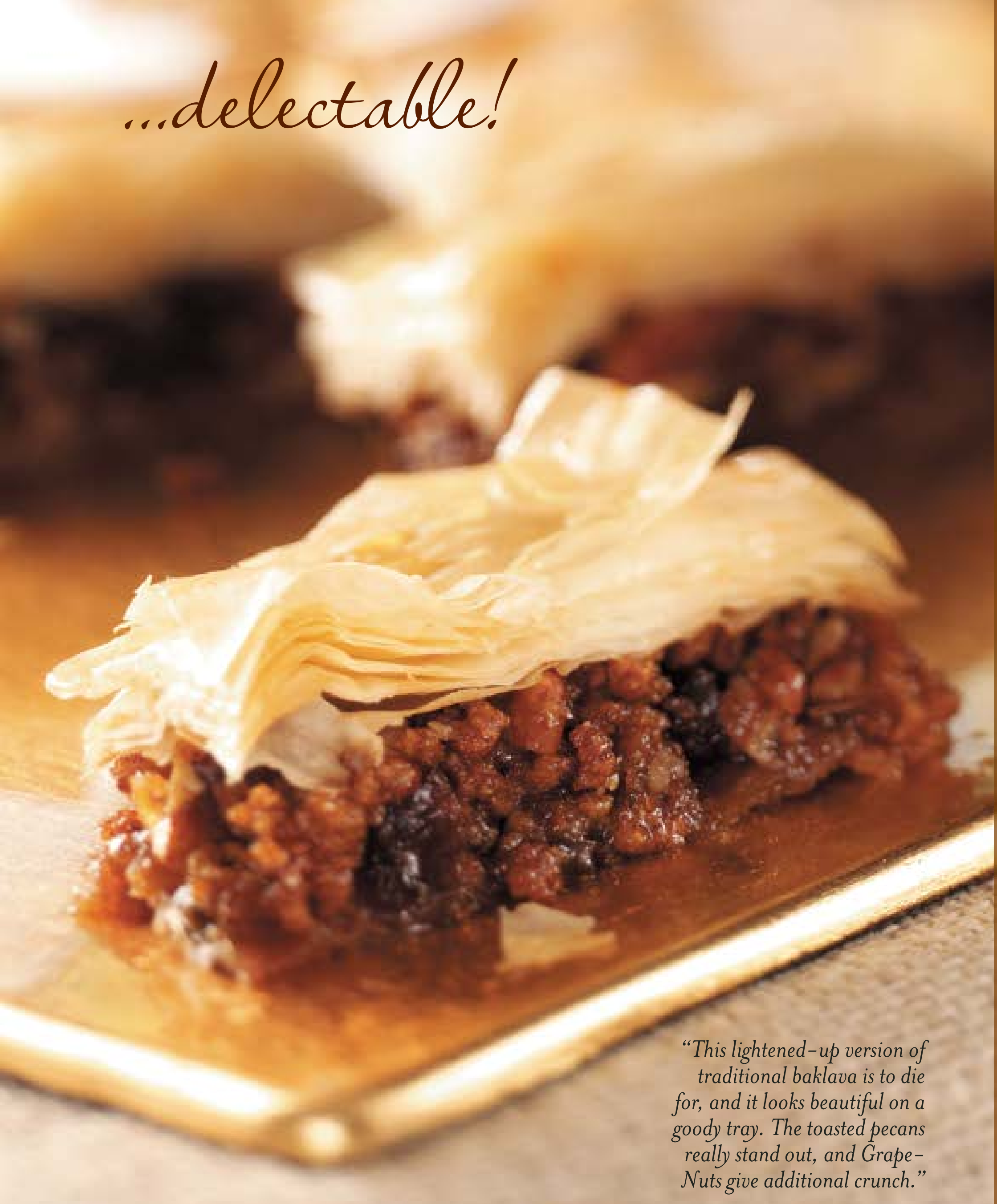

"This lightened-up version of traditional baklava is to die for, and it looks beautiful on a goody tray. The toasted pecans really stand out, and Grape-Nuts give additional crunch."

Raisin Pecan Baklava

PREP: 30 min.
BAKE: 20 min. + cooling

Liv Vors
Peterborough, Ontario

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 4-1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 1/2 cup Grape-Nuts
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 8 sheets phyllo dough (14 inches x 9 inches)

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, water, honey and lemon juice. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat.

In a bowl, combine the pecans, cereal, raisins, brown sugar and cinnamon. Stir in 3 tablespoons of honey mixture; set aside.

Stack phyllo sheets on a work surface; trim 1 in. from the 9-in. side. Cut in half lengthwise, forming 8-in. x 7-in. rectangles. Overlap two pieces in a greased 8-in. square baking dish; spray with cooking spray. Repeat three times.

Spread nut mixture over top. Overlap two pieces of phyllo to cover nut mixture; spray with cooking spray. Repeat with remaining phyllo. Using a sharp knife, cut into 24 rectangles, about 2-1/2 in. x 1 in.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Reheat reserved honey mixture; pour over hot baklava. Cool completely on a wire rack. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

NEXT ISSUE'S MENU

The upcoming *Taste of Home* issue will tickle your taste buds with foods for a flavorful February and mouth-watering March. Here's a hint of what you can expect...

Warm up a chilly day with **prize-winning slow cooker recipes** from our big national contest. Besides savory entrees, expect surprises for breakfast and dessert.

Desserts to dazzle your valentine will have an extra ingredient—they're all made with love!

A hearty **St. Patrick's Day breakfast** will get this holiday off to a tasty start. It's easy—and that's no blarney!

Special **yeast breads** will rise to the occasion. These eye-catchers will brighten a holiday brunch or any day.

Plus, the Feb/Mar issue will include an Easter menu from one of our field editors..."Mom's Best" orange roughy dinner...a budget-friendly soup supper...and many more favorites from *TOH* readers. Look for it soon!